

PERSIAN TREASURES IN EREVAN



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*A Selection of Manuscripts
from the Matenadaran Collection*

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Notes to the Reader

Transliterations of Persian locutions are in italics and have been carried out according to the original pronunciation, except for the definite article which retains the written form e.g., *al-Din* instead of *od-Din*. The Iranian possessive, *ezafa*, is represented by: -e or -i. In addition the letters: و ص غ ع خ چ ذ ث are transcribed: *th, dh* or *z, ch, kh, ' , gh, s* or *ş, w* or *v*. The words Persia or Iran and book or manuscript should be considered as equivalents. Geographical areas and cities are named in the current English form, while proper names retain the Iranian diction.

We use the following institutional abbreviations:

BnF - Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

BL - British Library, London

CBL - Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

MET - Metropolitan Museum, New York

MIK - Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin

MFA - Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

TIEM - Türk ve Islam Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul

TSK - Topkapi Saray Kütüphanesi, Istanbul

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PREFACE

The Arts of the Book in the Iranian world are certainly among the most amazing achievements of artistic creativity hailing from this geographical area. These arts concern much more than what is commonly termed “Persian miniatures”, a medium that seduced many artists from Europe including the likes of Henri Matisse as early as the beginning of the 20th century. It is the very combination of skills, which were in most cases developed in the princely workshop, *ketabkhana* that brought to life the marvels of Persian manuscripts.

To make these works, the first concern was to gather the best possible materials: the finest papers were sized with starch, sometimes dyed with subtle colors, polished and trimmed to the desired dimensions, then folded in quires or bi-folios. Inks and pigments were made according to skilled recipes, using the best available minerals, such as gold, lapis lazuli, vermillion, ocher and orpiment, together with vegetal dyes such as saffron, henna, cochineal or indigo. The quality of these pigments –their nature as well as their degree of elaboration– was, of course, in accordance with the wealth of the patron.

Before to setting to work, it is likely that a sort of “brainstorming” took place in the *ketabkhana* between the chief calligrapher and the head of the painters, *naqqash-bashi*, together with the patron himself or an official representing him. Decisions would thus be made regarding the format of the manuscript, the number of lines of text per page and the place to be allotted for illustrations and illuminations as well as their number and subject.

Before the scribe, *khattat*, began the copy, the paper underwent a ruling, *mastar*, which allowed the calligrapher to write his text not only on straight horizontal lines, but also in a justified frame, *jadval*, which would later be enhanced with lines in black ink, colors and gold. Once the calligrapher finished his copy of the text, he handed the sheets to the painters, *naqqash*, and illuminators, *mozahheb*. The illuminations show double-page frontispieces ‘*onwan*, or rosettes, *shamsa*, together with decorated and gilded head-page title, *sarlowh*.

Tasks were often divided; some of the painters being in charge of the outline and general composition *tarh*, others being engaged with the coloring, *rang amizi*, while still others were concerned with the rendering of such delicate details as the faces *chehre-pardazi*. This explains why the signatures of individual artists are quite rare in Persian paintings. This is not, however, the case with calligraphy, which was considered to be the premier artistic form in all Islamic lands. This fact probably explains not only why calligraphers signed their works, but also why we know – through biographies for instance – much more about their lives and works.

Once the copy, illustration and illumination were finished, the manuscript was sewn on its back and prepared for binding. The pages might also be inserted and framed with another kind of paper, *vassali*, such as dyed and gold-speckled sheets, *zarafshan*, or marbled papers, *kaghaz-e abri*, thus giving the volume colorful margins.

Book bindings were usually made of leather, which was the case up to the 16th century. From the Safavids onwards, the laquer bindings became more and more popular. Whether made of leather or papier-mâché, some of the lacquered book-bindings are works of art in their own right and will occasionally bear the signature of a master bookbinder.

Among the many treasures kept in the Matenadaran (*Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts*) the collection of Persian manuscripts contains a number of outstanding examples of these illuminated masterpieces. Some of the works date from the late 13th to the 19th century and cover almost all of the major centers of manuscript production of the Persianate world –including some areas such as Uzbekistan or Kashmir, far away from the actual frontiers of today's Iran. Some copies are particularly rare, such as the *Homayun-nama* of Zojjaji.

This is the only known manuscript of this text's first volume, written in Baghdad circa 1280 –a few decades after the Mongol destruction of the capital of the Abbasid caliphs– and bearing the ex-libris of the immensely rich minister Shams al-Din Muhammad Joveyni. Although not illustrated, this manuscript shows a delicately gilded frontispiece.

The manuscripts that precede the beginning of the 14th century are very rare, especially those with illustrations. By the end of this century, the manuscripts were more numerous, growing from hundreds in the 15th century, to thousands in the centuries that followed. Belonging to the early Safavid period, there is also a manuscript of Hatefi's *Khosrow and Shirin*, dated 1516, copied in Herat by Mir 'Ali al-Hosayn al-Kateb. Another notable work from nearly the same period is a gorgeous Quran. The collection also counts some very fine examples of calligraphy signed by Mir 'Emad al-Hasani, Abdol-Mejid Taleqani, Gholam Reza, as well as a singular calligraphy specimen from Bukhara.

It is a pleasure to write these lines as a preface for the work of my longtime friend Armen Tokatlian, an art historian rewarded in Iran for his many achievements concerning Persian arts. He has already published such beautiful volumes as the *Falnamah* (Paris, 2007), as well as enriching studies in *Kalantars* (Paris, 2009), where he writes about the Armenian lords in Safavid Iran. This present publication aims to materialize the historic cultural links between the neighboring ancient kingdoms of Armenia and Persia, a story so admirably recounted in the past by Nezami in the romance of *Khosrow and Shirin*.

Yves Porter

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLECTION

The Matenadaran collection of Persian, Arabic and Turkish language manuscripts¹ was achieved through acquisitions and individual or institutional donations. The original core of the Persian manuscripts section, consisting of two hundred and one pieces was to be found in the Holy Etchmiadzin library around 1880s. In 1903 the collection was enriched by thirty manuscripts that were given by Khachig Vartabed Dadian, a high priest who had gathered these works from Armenian villages in Iranian Azerbaijan. Another large portion of the manuscripts were collected after the Armenian Genocide in 1915 and brought to Holy Etchmiadzin from those devastated Armenian territories, amongst them thirty five works written in Arabic script. When the Matenadaran opened in 1959, as Mesrop Mashtots Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, the oriental manuscripts collection was enhanced by former holdings from Myasnikyan State Public Library, the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages in Moscow² and Erevan State University collections.

It is interesting to note that the majority of the twenty-three Persian manuscripts received from Lazarev Institute bear handwritten notes from their former Armenian's owners.

An important succession of different donors, such as H. Hazarian, V. Salatian, A. Aivazian, V. Samuelian, H. Edgarian and A. Hovhanisian, increased the size and improved the quality of the collection that grew from 446 volumes in 1958³ to 2214 in 2006⁴. After a recent significant and generous contribution of over four hundred manuscripts in Arabic script made by Armenian philologist and arabist M. Minasian, the Matenadaran collection of Oriental manuscripts now comprises a total of 2723 volumes, of which 456 contains works in Persian.

The majority of the historical, poetic and medical Persian manuscripts were previously in possession of Armenians from Tabriz, Isfahan, Erevan, Salmast, Marand, Khoy, Maragha, Derbend, Baku, Shirvan, Astrakhan, Tiflis and Saint Petersburg. Several pages from these manuscripts feature handwritten notes and commentaries in Armenian and indicate the knowledge of these bibliophiles. For instance a note written by Grigor and Tsatur, the seventeenth century Armenian physicians of New Julfa of Isfahan, approves the contents of the manuscript of *Zakhire-ye Khorezmshahi* or The Treasury of the Khoremsah by Zayn al-Din Esma'il Gorgani, the first great Persian work devoted to medicine (N°1149).

This manuscript, copied circa 1475, was rebound in 1747 by an Armenian binder from New Julfa of Isfahan. An inscription in Armenian on the cover mentions "it was prepared in memory of Tsatur, the son of Minas". Another display of individual Armenian's interest in Persian arts of the book is furnished by the presence of calligraphers from Armenian origin, such as Mirza Yazdanbakhsh b. Mirza Tatos, the calligrapher of a *Dorre-ye Naderi* (N°22) which was copied in Ahar in 1819. Mirza Yazdanbakhsh, the Persian equivalent of the Armenian name Astvatatsur, was the son of Mirza Tatos, an early nineteenth century scribe who signed and left his seal imprint on numerous chancellery documents⁵.

Next of these calligraphers is Mirza Yusof Nersesov who was not only a scribe, but also the author of a History of Karabagh called *Tarikh-e Safi* (A Truthful History), with personal biographical details given in the preface.

Named Hovsep, he was an Armenian, born in Hadrut a village of Karabagh. At the age of 9 years old he was kidnapped by Persian bandits and brought to Iran.

Once converted to Islam he entered the service of the Shah and was taught Persian, Turkish and Arabic. Later on he became a scribe in the office of Amir Khan Sardar, the uncle of Qajar crown prince 'Abbas Mirza⁶. After the second Russo-Persian war in 1826-1828, Mirza Yusof returned to Karabagh, his native land, where Archbishop Baghdasar Hasan-Jalalyan christened him again. In 1853 Mirza Yusof left for the Daghestan and was there in the service of Grigori Orbeliani, the Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Daghestan Army, as a translator. Three years later he compiled a new edition of *Derbendnama* (History of Derbend)⁷ for Hakob Lazariants, who was a Russian army officer in Daghestan.

This *Derbendnama* contains chronicles from the period of the Sassanian kings, the Arabs' military campaigns and the spread of Islam in Daghestan down to the year 1604.

Equally captivating is the copy of Abu Naser Farrah's *Nisab al-Sabiyyan*, an Arabic-Persian dictionary in verse (N°597) by the scribe Garsevan Chavchavdzeh. Hailing from a noble Georgian family, he took part in the 1779 negotiations with Prince Potemkin, the representative of the Russian empire at the time of the establishment of Russia's protectorate over the Georgian kingdom⁸. The prince Chavchavdzeh signed his name in the colophon of the manuscript under that of Garsevan ibn Parsadan Chechefov.

Taken altogether, the Matenadaran collection of Persian manuscripts provides a comprehensive panorama of the written culture, sciences and history of the Iranian people. The roughly thirty manuscripts comprising chronicles and historical material, such as *History of Vassaf*, *Zafarnama* of Nezam al-Din 'Ali Sami, *Hasht Behesht*, of Hakim al-Din Bitlisi, the first five volumes of Mirkhond's *Rouzat al-Safa*, the first volume of Khvandamir's *Habib al-Siyyar*, *Sharaf Nama* of Sharaf Khan Bitlisi, *Tarikh-e 'alam ara-ye 'Abbasi* of Eskandar Beg Torkman, the History of Nader Shah by Mirza Mahdi Khan Astarabadi and *Tarikh-e Danabileh* of 'Abd al-Razzaq Donboli, are all fine specimens of literature of this genre. One of the most intriguing pieces of this group is the *Homayun-nama*, one of the oldest Persian manuscripts from the Matenadaran (N° 561).

It was transferred there in 1956 from the State Public Library, although at an earlier point in time it was in the Lazarev Institute in Moscow as witnessed by the imprint of two seals (f1a and 254b). There is also a handwritten note in French on the flyleaf that reads « *Chahname-i Firdoucy livre royal de Firdoucy mort en l'an 421 de l'hégire qui fut chargé de la composition de ce poème par le Chah Mahmade le Gaznevide. Le sujet de ce célèbre poème héroïque est l'histoire des anciennes dynasties de l'Iran* ». Obviously the author misunderstood the subject of this manuscript as he inaccurately describes it as being the famous Book of Kings by Ferdowsi. In fact, the *Homayun-nama* is a historiography of Islamic dynasties written in verse during the rule of Abaqa Ilkhan (1265-82).

The author of *Homayun-nama* is Hakim Zojjaji, a thirteenth century poet, mentioned twice in the text (f 4b and 16a) and again in the *Farhang-e Jahangiri* dictionary. Zojjaji dedicated it to 'Ala al-Din 'Ata-Malek Joveyni (1226-1283), the governor of Iraq and himself a trained historian during the rule of Ilkhanid Hulagu Khan⁹. An inscription on the illuminated roundel, *shamsa*, on the opening page of this manuscript, mentions that it was made for the library of Shams al-Din Joveyni (d. 1285) in Baghdad. This manuscript, copied during the author's lifetime, is the unique extant copy of the first volume of Zojjaji's *Homayun-nama*.

Another distinctive manuscript of historical significance in the Matenadaran Collection is a compilation of approximately 200 letters and decrees of Hosayn 'Ali and Muhammad, the khans of Erevan between 1764 and 1805, written by Mirza Muhammad Musallam, the chief scribe of the chancellery.

This compilation is an important source to better understand the political and social-economic history of Erevan khanate and more broadly that of Eastern Armenia. Among other material it contains the correspondence of the khans with Herakl II, the king of Georgia, along with neighboring khanates rulers, high officials of the khans' administration, decrees appointing officials and others confirming the rights of Ghugas as catholicos of all Armenians. Among the Matenadaran holdings in the area of medicine, special mention must be made of twelve manuscripts.

These are, apart from the above work of Zayn al-Din Esma'il Gorgani, two copies of its abridgment named *Khuffa-yeh 'Alayi* (N° 213, 626), a seventeenth century copy of Hajji Zayn al-Attar's *Ekhtiyarat-e Badi'i* (N° 30), three nineteenth century copies of Soltan 'Ali Gunabad's *Dastur al-'Ellaj* (N° 28), Mozaffar al-Shafa'yi's *Qarabadin* (N° 1146) and 'Ali Afzal Qazvini's *Manafe'ye Afzaliyyeh* (N° 97) and finally four manuscripts of *Tohfah al-Momenin* of Muhammad Tankaboni (N° 19, 464, 1893, 2171). Quran and religious texts are essential components in the Islamic world of the book, and the Matenadaran Persian manuscript section keeps two jewels of penmanship: a magnificent Safavid period Quran (N° 1623) and Mulla Baqir's *Zad al-Ma'ad* commissioned by the Qajar prince, Bahman Mirza. On the other hand, Illustrated manuscripts are primary indebted to the Persian world of the book, and the Matenadaran has several remarkable volumes. One of the earliest of those illustrated manuscripts is a copy of Hatefi's *Khosrow va Shirin* (N° 584) dated 1516, with a double-page painting frontispiece and calligraphy by the famous Mir 'Ali al-Hosayni al-Kateb.

Another hallmark of the collection is its copy of the most celebrated epic in Persian literature: The Book of Kings or *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi (N° 535), with fifty four paintings in the regal Qajar style made for a high ranking dignitary named Karin Khan Bidashahri. An additional splendid manuscript is the Quintet or *Khamsa* of Nizami (N° 548) copied in 1677 in Isfahan by Karim al-Din Madah Shirazi with thirty seven paintings; witness to the lasting magnificence of the Isfahan school. Calligraphy specimens are also well represented in the Matenadaran, particularly through an intact album (N° 559) of concertina form. The majority of the forty eight calligraphies in this album are signed by Abu Ahmad Muhammad Shafi' (d. 1845) from a Shiraz family, also known as Mirza Vesal, but undeniably the most outstanding calligraphy specimens bears the signature of master calligraphers Mir 'Emad al-Hasani and Darvish 'Abd al-Majid Taliqani.

A further noteworthy work is an album (N° 1999), formerly in the collection of Luiza Aslanyan, with several paintings and tinted drawings executed by Qajar proficient's artists, mirroring the Safavid style. The sheer variety and sophistication of this Matenadaran collection, initiated more than a century ago, provides scholars and connoisseurs a new opportunity to explore fully the Persian manuscript art in its splendor.

Kristine Kostikyan

Curator, Persian section, Matenadaran



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PERSIAN POETRY AND LITERARY GENRE

The vast majority of existent Persian manuscripts contain poetry and Matenadaran ones are no exception. The Arab conquest of Iran in the seventh century coincides with the sustainable expansion of the Persian language outside Iran boundaries and in due course, Persian became the elite language in most of the eastern Islamic world. However, some Arab poets who were already familiar with the Sassanian court, occasionally employed Persian locutions in their poetry, called *Farasiyat* after Abu Nowas work. It was not before the accession of the Abbasids in 750, that Persians were able to infuse the culture of the Arab conquerors with their arts and myths as well as with their literature.

Arabic poetry predates the advent of Islam, even if much of the evidence for this comes from later anecdotal accounts. Iranian poetry, on the other hand, is linked to a more ancestral tradition.

The sophisticated nature of Persian poems was forged through literary conventions and methodology, with little room for poetic license. In more practical terms Persian post-Islamic poetry was confronted with the need to reconstruct the ancient forms.

This lyrical creativity began favoring new stylistic trends, most noticeably under the patronage of local Muslim rulers, who promoted poetry schools, while seeking to strengthen their influence in regional politics. In the late tenth century, Persian court poets would become an appendage of royal etiquette. Recitation contests held at palaces determined a poet's immediate recognition, advancement or even his sink into oblivion.

It was under these circumstances that the renowned figures of Persian literature, Rudaki (d.ca.941), Abul Khayr (d.ca.1049) and to a lesser degree Ferdowsi (d.1020) were able to exert their artistic influence.

The path towards a broader conception of poetry was established at the beginning of the twelfth century with a cortege of technical implements¹⁹. Among them the rhyme and the distich, *bayt*, were of substantial importance, even if they were, in part, borrowed from Arabic poetry.

The adjunction of specific metre and literary genres gave Persian poems a unique character that was enhanced by the practice of recitation in public. As the vocal beauty of rhyme was essential, a more compound performance was needed to further develop this art.

With a distich, the most simple of the poetic form, as a point of departure, Persian poetry evolves to a level of sophistication that includes different literary genres. The *qasida*, which some sources date to the time of the Sassanian (226-651), but which undoubtedly existed from the ninth century, is one of the most ancient.

Qasida was conceived in order to praise an individual figure, generally a ruler and to enhance his qualities, with no other prospect for the poet than financial reward.

Instances of ingratitude sometimes happened, as when Ferdowsi was confronted by the covetousness of Soltan Mahmud of Ghazna. The inner structure of *qasida* is divided into three parts. The first, called *nasib*, is linked to a particular circumstance: a military victory, a tragedy or

a celebration related to the sponsor. The second, thus central, is all in praise of the same patron whose name is frequently cited in a transitional distich called *makhlas*.

The final section of a *qasida* contains a self-tribute to the poet's talents. All rulers, being them small princes such as the Atabegs in Fars, or more powerful sovereigns of Samanid, Seljuk, Ghaznavid or Ilkhanid in Iran, commonly enjoyed this kind of panegyric poetry.

It was a phenomenon of courtly praise to hire a noteworthy poet to write *qasida*, but some poets such as Khayyam (d.1132) or Attar (d.1229) never did.

The poet Wasfi is considered to have instigated the *qasida* tradition in Iran, with his panegyrics written for Soltan Ya'qub, the founder in 867 of the Saffarid dynasty¹¹. Afterward the consistent contributions of Anvari (d.1191) and Khaqani (d.1199) would pave the way for the ability of future generations to compose *qasida*.

In regards to another form of poetry genre, it was the poet, mathematician and astronomer Khayyam who made the Persian quatrain, *roba'i*, famous, even if there is evidence that quatrain was already a much admired form of verse in Persia in ancient times. A *roba'i* have four line verses with the same rhymes only on three of them or two distiches with the same rhyme. Without a doubt it is Khayyam who set the standard for all upcoming quatrain compositions. With few exceptions, by the twelfth century, the majority of Persian and Hindustan poets exerted quatrains; which was favored by calligraphers for their penmanship specimens. The notion of the relationship between form and meaning emerges in these *roba'i* calligraphic specimens, *qita'*, where the aesthetic of each page's composition creates a visual harmony so sought after by calligraphers. *Ghazal* is the third form on which Persian manuals dealing with prosody and versification focus upon the most. It is close in structure to *qasida*, but very different in subject matter. The *ghazal* have Arabic roots and narrate the love of a man towards an unsustainable beauty. Consequently, the *ghazal* works to exploit the ambiguity between holy and profane love and it is precisely this thematic nuance that was often the key to the poem's success.

The poet's own name or his penname, *takhallus*, appears at the end of each *ghazal*, which grants each work its own personal resonance. The *ghazal* which acquired major importance from the twelfth century onwards and was transmitted primarily in oral form, flourished during the time of Rumi (d.1273) and Sa'di (d.1291), which are both indebted to Sanai (d.1131). It is the literary figure Hafiz (d.1492), who exploited *ghazal* solely for the manifestation of his own poetic genius.

To be able to gather all components in a poem requires the ability to display harmonious metric arrangements, *bahr*. The Iranian metric requires knowledge of rhythm structure, which is dreadfully complicated to create. Readers must be taken in by the delicious music of delicate rhythms, the beat of the refrain and the charming imagery. Archaic Persian metrics, such as *mudari*, *hafife-e mahbun* and *mujjat*, were gradually replaced by *motaqareb*, often employed for epic literature and *roba'i* poems. Alongside the former, other metrics were in use up until the nineteenth century, namely: *kafis*, *hazaj*, *sari'*, *mozare*, *ramal*, *rajaz* and *mojtas*. To attain the heights of lyrical excellence, poets were sometimes required to introduce altering metric, *zehafat*.

The efforts of these artists and poets are mirrored on the folios of magnificent manuscripts. These manuscripts reunite a broad variety of works of literature, which provide a seemingly infinite wealth of topics such as prose anthology *monsha'at*, anthology of poetry, *majmo'a*, rhyming couplets poems, *masnavi*¹², collection of poems, *divan*, all collected works, *kolliyat*, conundrum poems, *moa'mma*, miscellany, *jong*¹³, versified discourses, *sokhan*, and odes, *ghazaliyat*.

Each of these categories can be understood through the process that brought them into existence, mostly because all of them share an internal coherence of content.

Anthology is arguably the most potent since it contains a condensed structure of successive poems. The methods used to assemble the components of Persian poetry manuscripts are directly related to the choice of literary genre.

The range of different categories and the prospect of combinations between genres, created a large demand for poetry manuscripts that could only be filled through the framework of wealthy patronage. Nearly every luxurious poetry manuscript was made under royal or princely impulse and with unrestricted sponsorship of book workshops, *kitabkhana*¹⁴. This royal library-book workshop was long associated with the perquisite to participate in the cultural life of the court, even if in the seventeenth century this became less a privilege of dedicated rulers and more an achievement of extended nobility.

A primary function of Persian poetry and lyrical literature was to allow booklovers to reach a spiritual consciousness of enhanced self-reflection, materially sustained by the calligrapher's gleaming script. Preserving the original words of the poet, which is akin to a metaphysical entity, is figured into the value attached to such poetry.

This was achieved through collecting all written available sources during an author's lifetime, through poetry compilation manuscripts named *noskheh-ye tahriri* or *bayyaz*¹⁵.

This process of gathering and research was never abrogated in terms of exploration and study of poetic sources to conceive an original version or *princeps* manuscript, which would allow future generations to perpetuate the most authentic form given by an author.

Persian poetry happens to employ the language of pious mysticism and often embraces spiritual meanings hidden away in verses of exaggerated expression of the sorrows of love. Poets had ready access to a stunning world suited to imaginative treatment, and they delighted in the necessity of veiling it with Sufi symbolism. It can be said that Attar was among the first poets to embody this doctrine of Sufi mystical paraphrase, *tasavvuf*, as a constant sign-post of his poetry.

By definition, poems with mystical content are unwilling to loathe the beauty and pleasures of life. It is, however, a poetic certainty that only through pain and sorrow can one reach the fruitful land of metaphysical reflection. Cupbearers, mistresses, nightingales and cypress trees are some of the allegorical subjects often placed in the context of poems, not worthy in and of themselves but as wholehearted metaphors of the desire for mystical genuineness.

The inherent teaching of all these pearls of wisdom is impossible to explain away, other than by accepting the frame of mind in which the individual existence is mutually reliant to all divine creation. The initiated are acquainted with this anthem and use it as additional incentive to experience spiritual introspection. It is a striking coincidence that at a time when mystical poetry blossom in Persia and Hindustan, exquisite writing appears in Europe. The works of Saint Francis of Assisi and Dante or that of the anonymous Romance of Roses contains allegorical visions, with pivotal mystic imagery that is directly related to oriental wisdom. In Persian poetry it seems impossible to attach any accomplishment as replicate in the mirror of life without integrating the spiritual and the erotic, the intense expression of passionate love, pity for the unfortunate and patience in the fate of adversity.

Ultimately, spiritual magnificence coupled with aesthetic achievements is manifest in most of Persian poetry manuscripts.

THE BOOK WORKSHOP TRADITION IN PERSIA

ILKHANIDS (1256-1353)

The different dynasties which ruled Persia between the years 1100 and 1500, all with a strongly nomadic heritage, incorporated in a straightforward manner, the culture, ethics and language of that country. The great majority of manuscripts produced in Iran before the thirteenth century are not illustrated. Within the Mesopotamian boundaries under the influence of Eastern Christian and Syriac painting styles, several manuscripts with illustrations were produced between 1190 and 1300, mostly with narrative or scientific contents¹⁶. Pictures in secular manuscripts acquire a new prominence in the period following Genghis Khan's (d.1227) invasion of Iran, particularly those illustrations of the long epic poem of the history of Persian dynasties before Islam: the *Shahnama* or Book of Kings by Ferdowsi¹⁷. The Mongols, who took the name of Ilkhanids during their reign in the *Iranzamin*, showed interest in religious traditions of other eras and cultures beginning with the reign of Hulegu Khan (d.1265). Their support, however, for Muslim religion and history became more evident after Ghazan Khan's (d.1304) conversion to Islam in 1295.

Ghazan Khan's patronage of religious and secular art parallels that of Kubilai Khan in China in the years around 1260. Both rulers commissioned royal chronicles, encouraged theological discussion and endorsed the construction of magnificent buildings. A critical effect of the Ilkhanid public conversion to Islam was the sudden surge in the production of manuscripts¹⁸.

This was possible due to the large papermaking facilities and the establishment of book workshops. The vizier at the time was Rashid al-Din Fazlollah (d. 1318), a converted Jew. With the high sponsorship of Ghazan Khan, he established a scriptoria complex in Tabriz, which is considered to be the earliest compound of a book workshop, *kitabkhana*.

This concept of a book workshop or atelier-library, associated with a particular ruler, where notable artists, calligraphers and all other necessary professionals could assemble to produce manuscripts, would become the model for later dynasties to follow.

Royal patronage and production in *kitabkhana* under Mongol-Ilkhans of Iran reverberate in some of the subsequent achievements found during the later Timurid and Safavid dynasties. The Ilkhanid practice of using imperial projects to target sedentary audiences without compromising their nomadic heritage is superbly represented in sumptuous Qurans¹⁹ and manuscripts such as *Manafi'-i al-Hayvan* and *Jame' al-Tavarikh*, both of which were realized at the command of Ghazan Khan as well as a royal copy of *Shahnama*.

The first of these manuscripts, titled Benefits of Animals²⁰, is a translation from Arabic into Persian of a zoological text of the usefulness of organs and other body parts of animals by Ibn Bakhtishu.

Even if repair and over painting slightly modify the original aspect of the illustrations, they seem to follow the tradition of Arabic bestiary and scientific texts that were ultimately drawn from Greek sources, but now enhanced with acutely ornamented elements of Ilkhanid influence. The production of the second aforementioned manuscript, called *Compendium of Chronicles*, required an enormous amount of time, artistic ability and clairvoyant supervision that could only be realized with the resources that none other than a royal book workshop could provide. The initial single volume, which under the supervision of Rashid al-Din, was developed into a work of four volumes, is considered to be the earliest universal history written in Arabic and Persian. Only fragmented portions of this important work still exist.

They are split between the Edinburgh University Library and the Khalili collection in London, formerly in the Royal Asiatic Society²¹. Rashid al-Din had the clairvoyance to set in motion the multicultural painters, scribes, papermakers and binders working in his complex²². Once the initial compilation had been done, the colossal task to illustrate the text, which covers a hagiography of Ghazan Khan, a universal history, a survey of genealogies of the Mongol, Arab, Jews, Franks and Chinese peoples, was only possible thanks to the financial aid and the skill of Rashid al-Din. Pictures in this manuscript focus on a sober setting of events with tinted drawings, particularly expressive faces and relatively plentiful figures. Illustrations of the battles, enthronements, military sieges and other incidents from the life of Prophet Muhammad coexist with resounding subjects from the Old Testament as well as Buddhist imagery. It contains 540 paintings form a visual language derived from other cultures established models. These pictures epitomize the authority of monarchs, the military might of the Mongols and finally, the securing of spiritual exaltation in Islam. Stylistic hallmarks of these paintings aside, it is the gargantuan task accomplished by Rashid al-Din's workshop that so captivates historians. Such an exertion was not merely due to opportunity but was the expression of a closely controlled corpus. Ghazan Khan doesn't live to see the *Compendium* completed. It is Oljaytu Khan instead, the only Shi'ite Ilkhanid ruler, who will receive it in 1314. Some years later the Tabriz book workshop was presumably disbanded, although some of its artists found employment under other patronage. The culminating stage of the activities at Ilkhanid *kitabkhana* that followed was the compilation of the aforementioned Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* or Book of Kings²³.

Although it is generally believed to have been produced for a royal patron, unyielding evidence of this is only somewhat provided by the painter Dust Muhammad in his 1545 preface to Bahram Mirza's album²⁴. In this work, Dust Muhammad identifies this *Shahnama* as being made during the reign of Abu Sa'id Bahador Khan (d.1335). Given the dominant role of *Shahnama* in Ilkhanid painting, amongst the ten extant manuscripts, this manuscript, almost certainly sponsored by Abu Sa'id Bahador Khan, is the undisputed masterpiece of them all. It was never finished, which was perhaps due to the sheer size of the project or perhaps due to a lack of time or financial support. The imposing scale and ordered combination of text and illustrations, shows a creative ambition to explore innovative forms of painting. The fact that this codex was dismantled makes examination very difficult. Only 58 out of the estimated 180 illustrations exist²⁵. Several of these have been pasted over unrelated text and some have been restored. This fragmentary condition of the manuscript adds more difficulties, especially the absence of the frontispiece and colophon, which would normally allow one to identify the artists involved and therefore its patron. The tacit assumption that the painters Ahmad Musa and Shams al-Din with 'Abdollah Sayrafi²⁶, the finest calligrapher at the time, all participated in this *Shahnama*, has thus not won universal acceptance. Nerveless the relevant attribution of themes in this Great Mongol Book of Kings offers an immediate identification of subjects. The compositions and architectures in the illustrations have been revised to suit the taste of the Mongol period. Enthronements, funerals and battle scenes are rendered with the same importance in rationalized space and are successful in capturing ideas from other cultures.

There is a particular willingness to echo the Chinese fashion, but only using available conventions. The emphasis on representing a great variety of individuals is balanced by the appearance of kings as well as heroes who are portrayed almost as Ilkhanid rulers.

The ambition of the Ilkhanid patrons of such visual splendor goes well beyond the means they would have had at their disposal, in order to give expression to idealized kingship and political propaganda.

INJUS (1304-1357)

During the short feudal rule of Inju in Shiraz, between 1325 and 1353, most of the manuscripts produced convey a singular style with an effortless script and small rectangular illustrations. The dispersed volumes of a *Shahnama* copied in 1341 and dedicated to Qevam al-Dawla, an Inju vizier of Fars, with two other earlier copies of *Shahnama*²⁷, are characteristic of this style, which often includes accentuated figures on a monochrome background. In comparison, the Qurans copied at the same period in the Khoda-Khana atelier-library, built by Inju ruler Abu 'Eshaq (d.1353) in the courtyard of the Shiraz Congregational mosque, shows a more finely penned calligraphy with gold and polychrome ornaments.

JALAYERIDS (1336-1432)

The legacy of Ilkhanid workshops was successfully transmitted to subsequent dynasties, particularly that of the Jalayerid who would come to power in Iraq and Azerbaijan.

During the rule of Soltan Oveys (d.1374) calligraphy gains a foremost role in art. Buildings such as Jome'-e Marjan religious school in Baghdad and Dawlat Khan Palace in Tabriz²⁸ were embellished with ornamental scripts by calligraphers Mobarak Shah and Mo'in al-Din Hajj Muhammad. The Jalayerid chancellery, *Divan-e Insha*, where all official documents and diplomatic correspondence was written undertook a new calligraphic formulation, with the development of shorthand features in already practiced *ta'liq* or hanging script²⁹.

These letters show greater undulation and the joining ligatures between certain letters are accentuated. This innovative script undergoes a stratification and methodological process that opens the way for *naskh-i ta'liq* script, later called *nasta'liq*. For the very first time, the poet Assar Tabrizi (d.1389) mentions this script in his poem *Mehr va Moshtari*³⁰ and Seraj Hosayn Shirazi in his 1454 calligraphy treatise *Tohfah al-Mohebbin*³¹ formally points out the existence of this type of writing. A hallmark manuscript in Bagdad, a copy of '*Ajayebrnama* of Muhammad b. Ahmad Tusi Salmani, written in elegant *nasta'liq* by Ahmad Heravi in 1388 at the royal workshop of Soltan Ahmad Jalayer (d.1410) with 254 illustrations³² was produced during the Jalayerid apogee.

Another factor that played an important part in the implementation of *nasta'liq* script in the Iranian world was the *horufiyya* rapture, a body of antinomian and incarnations doctrines evolved by Fazlollah Astarabadi (d. 1394)³³. Among the matters disclosed by this sect was the numinous meaning of Arab-Persian alphabet letters and their numerical value exaltation. Isfahan was the center of the earliest *horufi* (from Arabic *horuf* or letter) community, later gaining influence in the power centers of Jalayerid and Timurid.

This vigorous and complex mystical faction had prominent members, who pushed for acceptance of *nasta'liq* as an excellent script. The great calligrapher Ma'ruf Khatta al-Bagdadî, Torka Esfahani and the poet Qasem al-Anvari were falsely accused of being *horufi* plotters after the failed attempt on the life of Timurid ruler Shahrokh in 1427. This incident was followed by arrests and ultimately led to the banishment of all *horufis* in Persia.



The Jalayerids gained status as great patrons of literary activity and the poet Salman Savaji (d.1376) was the dynasty's foremost panegyrist. Under the rule of Soltan Oveys and Soltan Ahmad ateliers of painting flourished. Baghdad was the residence of artists Shams-al-Din, Jonayd Bagdadi³⁴ who was named *naqqash-e soltani* or royal painter, and 'Abd al-Hayy, whom Timur Beg (better known in Europe as Tamerlan) carried off to his capital, Samarkand, after the sack of Bagdad.

TIMURIDS (1370-1505)

Timur Beg (d.1405), the founder of the eponym dynasty, was solely concerned by the embellishment of his capital Samarkand. To fulfill this goal he brought skilled craftsman from across all of his newly conquered lands into the capital, yet under his rule there is no noteworthy manuscript production³⁵ to speak of. Timur Beg summoned Nezam al-Din 'Ali Sami to come to Samarkand in 1402 and asked him to write a panegyric about his life and deeds, but all extant copies of Sami's *Zafarnama* are posthumous to Timur Beg.

In the meantime the subsequent development of *nasta'liq* which became the style of calligraphy adopted by the Iranian world was challenged by the situation in Persia, where two writing styles were being practiced simultaneously. One style was exalted by Hafiz 'Abdollah and Sadr al-Din Ruzbihan Shirazi in the Fars province, and the other in Khorasan by followers of Mir 'Ali b. Hasan Tabrizi³⁶, (d.ca.1415) who signed a fragmentary copy of Nezami's *Khosrow va Shirin*³⁷. The gracefully inclined shape of the letters in *nasta'liq* script became paramount under the master penmanship of Ja'far Tabrizi al-Hafez (d.1460), who arrives in Herat from Tabriz in 1420 where the Timurid prince Baysonqor (d.1434) names him head of the *kitabkhana*. Unquestionably it is his refined calligraphy that we see in several manuscripts³⁸. Powerfully imprinted in the way he wrote *nasta'liq*, Ja'far Tabrizi began to add "Baysonqori" to his signature. Among his pupils in the *kitabkhana*, 'Abdollah Heravi, who designed monumental inscriptions and copied manuscripts at Timurid courts in Herat, Samarkand and Mashhad, should be mentioned.

A manuscript dated 1477 in the colophon shows that 'Abdollah Heravi continued to be active during the rule of Soltan Hosayn Bayqara, a great patron of arts and bibliophile. Timur Beg son and successor Shahrokh (d.1447) managed to maintain a *kitabkhana* in Herat. The library of Shahrokh benefits from a great reputation, and yet few manuscripts surface from this bookshop aside from two copies of *Majma' al-Tavarikh*³⁹ written by Hafez-i Abru (d.1430), who was also involved in the production of manuscripts at the *kitabkhana*, as well as a wonderful copy of *Me'rajnama*⁴⁰ of Malik Bakhshi, circa 1435 and a *Khamsa* of Nizami copied in 1431⁴¹ with a colophon specifying that it was made for Shahrokh. The ambition of the ruler Shahrokh goes beyond the compiling of historiography books; his political ambition was to establish strong links with the Ming dynasty in China.

After Li Xian's first Chinese mission to Herat, in 1419, Shahrokh sends a fleet of diplomats, headed by the painter Ghyath al-Din to Khanbalik (present-day Beijing)⁴². The result of this and future exchanges between these powerful empires was the awakening of Persian artists to Chinese art and crafts. Already present under the Ilkhanids, this subtle Chinese influence would acquire a transcendental iconic dimension, introduced throughout Persia, by the fabulous silk textiles and roll papers with their painted mythical imagery.

Four closely related courtly scenes painted in silk around 1430, probably intended to mimic Chinese customs can be found in public collections⁴³. In 1420, after bringing western Iran back under Timurid hegemony, prince Baysonqor drew a large number of calligraphers and painters from Tabriz to Herat. Few names among them are recorded⁴⁴ and it is therefore futile to try to properly identify their paintings, although slight stylistic differences are visible in existent manuscripts. The most famous of them is the Golestan Palace Library housed *Shahnama* (n°716) copied in 1430 by Ja'far Tabrizi with twenty two illustrations by unnamed master painters.

Most of the manuscripts produced in Herat's *kitabkhana* between 1421 and 1434 mirror the aesthetics of Prince Baysonqor, the son of Shahrokh, which became the highest standard for Persian books. Such a practice includes an ornamented frontispiece, '*onwan*', sometimes with an illuminated preface, *dibache*, fine calligraphy text framed with rulings *jadval-i atraf*, illuminated headpieces, *sarlowh*, and a final page with colophon, *khatima*.

The workshop artists produced new decorative embellishments during Baysonqor's time, which increased in the decades that followed.

The use of margins with distinctive colored paper initiated at the Jalayerid court atelier⁴⁵ spread under the Timurids, primary through imported Chinese colored and gold decorated papers stockpiled in Herat *kitabkhana*, which were later produced locally.

The earliest preserved manuscript with colored paper is a *Kolliyat* of Sa'di dated 1437 followed by a *Divan* of Hafiz from 1451⁴⁶. Among the extent manuscripts with different Chinese colored and gold-speckled paper is a single volume Quran, circa 1440⁴⁷, which exemplifies this decorative preference. These ornamental innovations also extended into experimenting with marbled paper, *abri*, and stenciled motifs⁴⁸ as marginal adornment. This first technique originated in India, and would develop from 1550 onwards during Safavid rule, with Mir Muhammad Taher and Yahya Qazvini producing very sophisticated marbled paper specimens. The stencil technique, sometimes called '*aks* or *kaghaz-i sozan*', demanded skilled handicraft, which employed several schemes and colors, creating a glittering visual texture on the page. The artist Muhammad Amin Mashhadi invented a seven colors stenciled pattern⁴⁹, further developed during the sixteenth century by Mawlana Kepek Heravi in Mashhad.

Conceivably one of the most advanced ornamental practices in the atelier-library of Herat was the decoration with tiny flecks of gold leaf sprinkled on paper, called *afshan* or *zarafshani*⁵⁰. In his *ensha* treatise *Jawahar-i Simi*,⁵¹ written in 1435, Simi Neyshapuri gives specific instructions on *afshan* techniques. The aforementioned fragmentary copy of Nezami's *Khosrow va Shirin* and a *Divan* of Hafiz from 1415 are the earliest known examples of manuscripts with gold-speckled⁵² margins. Leather-filigree decoration for the lining of a book binding (*doublure*), which had previously appeared in fourteenth century Mamluk covers, develops in Khorasan during the fifteen century.



The earliest datable Persian binding doublure filigree work is to be found in a *Divan* made for Soltan Ahmad Jalayer dated 1406⁵³. This technique, referred to as *monabbat-kari* by Dust Muhammad⁵⁴, consists of cutting delicate filigree patterns from meshes of leather, gilding and fix them onto colored paper on the lining of a binding cover. Another level of skill linked to this practice is decoupage calligraphy. The lines of text are obtained first by outlining the words to be cut out on a sheet of color paper and then pasting them onto a different color card. This labor-intensive technique called *qat'e* required a sharp bladed penknife and excellent dexterity. Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Sufi al-Maraghi was one of the first talented masters to cut out the entire text for a *Sad Kalima* of Imam 'Ali dated 1471⁵⁵. The calligrapher 'Abdollah, who was raised and trained in Herat, achieved the finest master work in *nasta'liq* cut-out paper in a copy of Bayqara's *Divan* completed in about 1490⁵⁶.

A further creative factor that contributed to the fame of the Baysonqor library was the compilation, for the very first time, of an album or *moraqqa'*⁵⁷ devoted to gathering calligraphic specimens, *jom'-e khutut*, of early grand masters with examples dating from between 1291 and 1343⁵⁸. All the album sheets were composed in Arabic, with hadith, Islamic prose, calligraphy exercises and specimens. Magnificent gold marginal ornamentation and illuminated polychrome headpieces and vignettes within the text enhance this compilation of previously dispersed pieces of calligraphy.

This album⁵⁹, compiled in 1433, emerges as the standpoint of collecting penmanship models and categorizes didactic awareness⁶⁰ of this art.

The example of Baysonqor set the framework for other royal patrons when commissioning albums compilations as a complete artistic event which lead to the production of a highly sought-after visual object⁶¹.

Baysonqor's other most famous enterprise was his review of Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* and the new preface in his name became the standard in subsequent copies. Baysonqor's contribution to the Persian arts of the book must be considered as central in every respect, while improvement in the art of calligraphy as well as superb illustrations spread in Shiraz *kitabkhana*. This first occurred in 1409 under his cousin Eskandar Soltan's governorship of Fars. A rebellious character, he married the daughter of the defeated Soltan Ahmad Jalayerid, a great patron of the arts and mentor to the poet Mirza Haydar Turkiguy (see p. 95).

Two Anthologies⁶² that were most certainly arranged for this Timurid prince in 1410, illustrates an early stage of development of the Shiraz workshop: rich colors, stereotyped landscapes, slender bodies and the massive use of gold and silver are employed to highlight the sky and surroundings. The convention of double page illustration, later adopted in significant manuscripts, was entrenched in these manuscripts. The exceptional Horoscope⁶³ manuscript, compiled in 1414, also for Eskandar Soltan, embraces all the magnificence of Shiraz *kitabkhana*, with chapter titles in sinuous *thuluth* script, adorning zodiacal figures and elegant angels. It is, without a doubt, a masterpiece. The short self-sufficient rule of Eskandar Soltan ends in 1414⁶⁴ when sovereign Shahrokh stripped him of his authority and installed his own son Ebrahim Soltan (d.1435) as governor of Fars.

Henceforth, the book workshops of Shiraz and Herat would entertain a close relationship. Artists and calligraphers moved between both cities to produce manuscripts under the patronage of the two brothers⁶⁵, Baysonqor and Ebrahim Soltan, who appear to have engaged in a kind of literary competition with an assortment of epistolary exchanges.

It was Mir Muhammad who taught calligraphy to Ebrahim Soltan. Monumental inscriptions and manuscripts copies were both of primordial interest to this prince. Among the calligraphic projects executed by Ebrahim Soltan can be mentioned Sa'di's tombstone and six Qurans⁶⁶, one of which was offered to the oratorio of Baba Lotfollah 'Emad al-Din in Shiraz. Scholars who wonder about the bibliophilic enthusiasm of Ebrahim Soltan can observe that at least three manuscripts exist with his ex-libris and at least six other manuscripts are connected with his patronage.

Along with the copy of *Shahnama*, the earliest illustrated manuscript connected with Ebrahim Soltan⁶⁷, the other noteworthy manuscripts are an Anthology of prose text, a copy of *Jami'a al-Sahi*

and a new version of *Zafarnama* written by Sharaf al-din 'Ali Yazdi⁶⁸ which is currently dispersed. It is sobering to realize that this entire body of manuscripts, illustrated or not, follow the prince's aesthetic ideals far beyond the pictorial achievement of Herat. To a certain degree the mannerism of Ebrahim Soltan's roughly one hundred existing illustrations, express more his personal taste rather than a visual concentration of broad Shiraz painting tradition, even if it was the painter Naser al-Din Mozahheb who was entrusted as the head of Shiraz atelier of books.

After the sudden death of Baysonqor in 1434, the manuscripts already initiated in the Herat *kitabkhana* were finished under the supervision of his son 'Ala al-Dawla and the calligrapher Sayyed Miraq. Shahrokh's death, twelve years later, created a power vacuum swiftly filled by Olog Beg who came to rule the Timurid territories from Samarkand. Olog Beg was a mathematician, an astronomer and the appointed governor of Samarkand. Olog Beg's scientific expertise was not matched by his skills in governance; yet he still sent ambassadors to Mongolia and China in 1420. His most notorious achievement was the construction of an Observatory by 'Ali Quchtchi in 1429. It is considered by specialists to have been one of the finest observatories in the Islamic world at the time and the largest in Central Asia. Under Olog Beg the *kitabkhana* of Samarkand managed to produce manuscripts by artist's 'Abdollah Heravi, Al-Bavardi and Zahir al-Din Azhar.

The *Zij-e Soltani-ye Gurgani*, an astronomical treatise written in 1437⁶⁹ by astronomers under Olog Beg's supervision and a copy of the famous Al-Sufi's *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabita*⁷⁰ or Book of Fixed Stars, are considered to be master works from this period in Samarkand. Abu Sa'id (d.1469), who came to power in Herat following the death of Olog Beg in 1449, saw an opportunity to seize power in the lost territories of western Iran with the removal of Turkmen Jahanshah. Tragically he ended up beheaded in Herat by the Aq Qoyunlu leader Uzun Hasan who pursued his conquest into Khorasan. Uzun Hasan placed Yagdar Muhammad on the throne at Herat, but he could not hold out for long against the local Timurid notables and their support for Prince Soltan Hosayn Bayqara (d.1506).

Bayqara defeats Yagdar in 1470 and would remain safely on the throne for thirty-six more years. Soltan Hosayn Bayqara earned a unique place among the outstanding cultural patrons of the Timurid period. As judged by his concern for the keeping of high standards for poetry as well as his extraordinary generosity towards poets, painters and all creative artists, there is no doubt that he represents the idealized Islamic kingship at its best.

This princely patronage and art sponsorship played a fundamental role in Herat cultural life, where important literary figures such as Jami (d.1492), Navai (d.1501), Kashifi (d.1505), Hatefi (d.1520), Helali (d.1523) and Khvandamir (d.1534), enjoyed a close personal relationship with Bayqara. These remarkable personalities composed their poems and lyrics in a lavish environment provided by the immeasurable financial generosity of Bayqara.

His interest in art and literature alone does not explain all this prodigality. This conspicuous acquisition of cultural prestige was more likely to have been strongly motivated by his political agenda. Even if information about the precise organization of the Bayqara workshop-library is missing, we are certain that artists, *naqqash*, calligraphers, *khattat*, gilders, *mozahheb*, and binders, *sahhaf* or *mojalled*, worked under the direction of a *kitabdar* or royally appointed librarian-director. The relationship between Mir 'Ali Shir Navai and the prince Hosayn Bayqara is consubstantial to the arts of book developed in Herat. The former belonged to a Uighur family that had been affiliated for generations with Bayqara's family by ties of foster brotherhood, hence his title of vizier and counselor at the court of Herat⁷¹. Mir 'Ali Shir Navai was a poet and a builder. Among his key contributions to the architecture of Herat is the Ikhlasiya, a large compound that also housed a book workshop. This *kitabkhana*, where numerous fine manuscripts were produced, was directed by Amir Ruhollah Mirak Naqqash (d.1507) and supervised by Navai.

The more than thirty poetic works by Navai were written in Chagatay, his mother tongue, and contain rhyming synonyms and seemingly endless parallel idiomatic and colloquial constructions. Navai's Quintet and Collected works⁷² are his most famous works.

For at least fifteen years Jami, Navai and Soltan Hosayn –the first two were affiliated to Naqshbandi Sufis– constituted a religious, military and administrative triumvirate governing Khorasan and endorsing art at the highest level. Authors such as Hatefi, Helali or Mirkhond (d.1498) produced masterpieces of literature during this period. With the arrival of the painter Kamal al-Din Behzad (d.1536) the Herat *kitabkhana* acquired a fresh luster – Navai having retired from all activities in 1497 – with remarkable force and varied inventive compositions in their illustrations.

The unimpeachable influence of Behzad who had the ability to execute carefully elaborated subjects, using brilliant colors and lifelike movements, is not systematic to all his paintings, but is showcased in his most significant manuscripts. Aside from the meager references by Behzad's contemporaries– in his *Kholasat al-Khabar* written in 1520, Khvandamir mentions that Behzad was related to Herat *kitabkhana*– little can be gleaned from existing paintings, except for the signed miniatures from the 1489 copy of Sa'di's *Bustan* kept at Dar al-Kutub of Cairo⁷³. No coherent biography of Behzad exists but certain facts about his life are well known. He first worked under Ruhollah Mirak Naqqash in Herat, where he is supposed to have produced prodigious artistic illustrations, but some scholars prefer the paintings of his contemporaries Shah Mozaffar or Qasem-i 'Ali.

Behzad worked with calligraphers Soltan 'Ali Kateb and Shaykh Muhammad on the following manuscripts: the 1468 *Zafarnama* of Yazdi⁷⁴, the 1487 *Mantik al-Tayr* of Attar⁷⁵ and the above quoted Cairo's *Bustan*.

After the demise of Soltan Hosayn Bayqara in 1506, Behzad was employed at the Safavid court at Tabriz⁷⁶, where he taught other artists, including his nephew the calligrapher Rostam 'Ali. His death in 1536 is given in a chronogram.

It is interesting to note that some Mughal artists of the seventeenth century used Behzad compositions as inspirational models. The traits of accuracy in pattern, the firmness in calligraphy and careful drawing are an important legacy of the Bayqara workshop, conceivably under Behzad's influence and more directly by the methods of master calligrapher Mir 'Ali al-Hosayni Heravi (d.1544) and Soltan 'Ali Mashhadi (d.1520) who were the greater specialists in the *nasta'liq* script. Mir 'Ali al-Hosayni Heravi was born in Herat to a family of *sayyed* and worked in the Timurid chancellery of Soltan Bayqara.

He occasionally uses the attributive name "al-Kateb al-Soltani", in his colophons, possibly in deference either to Soltan Bayqara or to Soltan 'Ali Mashhadi. Mir 'Ali excelled in the art of writing manuscripts (see p.54), calligraphy specimens and monumental inscriptions. Around the year 1519, he wrote a treatise on penmanship called *Medad al-Khutut*⁷⁷. Although he may have been associated with Safavid officials, such as the governor of Herat Karim al-Din Habibollah Savaji⁷⁸ (d.1526), the pivotal event of his life appears to be his forced removal by 'Obaydallah Khan from Herat, in 1529.

He was brought to Bukhara where he remains, producing numerous calligraphy specimens and manuscripts in the Shaybanid *kitabkhana*. The broadly appreciated calligraphy of Mir 'Ali's is mainly compiled in the so-called *Golshan* and Berlin albums⁷⁹. The considerable prestige and admiration enjoyed by Mir 'Ali in Bukhara never fully erased his displeasure at being forced to live there until his death⁸⁰.

His most important pupils were his own son, Mir Muhammad Baqr, active in Mughal India and Mahmud b. Ishaq Shihabi (d.1583) an accomplished master of *nasta'liq*, who wearied of Bukhara and went to Kabul and then finally to Herat. Shihabi copied many manuscripts and calligraphy specimen's sheets⁸¹ during his long career. At times he uses the name of Siyavoshani, a *nisba* commemorating his family's village near Herat⁸².

Soltan 'Ali Mashhadi was taught the art of calligraphy by Mawlana Azhar Heravi (d.1475). Soltan Hosayn Bayqara, Navai and the poet Jami praised the writing of Mashhadi, who penned a versified treatise called *Serat al-sotur-ya serat al-khutut* in 1514⁸³ on the methods, materials and teaching of calligraphy. Mashhadi's finest calligraphic works have been dispersed; they are to be found today in different museum collections⁸⁴. Mashhadi was also responsible for the inscriptions on the

Bagh-e Murad garden palace situated on the outskirts of Herat. He was later buried at Mashhad, opposite the sanctuary of Imam Reza⁸⁵. Soltan Muhammad Nur, one of Mashhadi's outstanding pupils, spent most of his life working for Navai at Herat, and was also active in Bukhara, where he died around 1539. Among the manuscripts copied in this calligrapher's elegant and fine *nasta'liq* script there is a lavish version of Yazdi's *Zafarnama*⁸⁶, completed in 1529, with Behzad paintings and illuminated ornaments made by Mir 'Azod Bokhari⁸⁷. The rising demand for manuscripts during Soltan Hosayn Bayqara's tenure and hence for bindings, brought about one innovation: lacquer and painted book covers (see p.106).

This original type of bookbinding would become a standard variant of the ornamental decoration of Persian book covers during the next two centuries. Neither of Soltan Hosayn Bayqara's sons and successors Badi' al-Zaman and Mozaffar Hosayn Mirza were able to preserve the cultural legacy



of the Timurid court. Badī al-Zaman leaves Herat in 1507 during Muhammad Shaybani Khan's invasion of the city, leaving the royal treasury behind. After a long period of peregrination Badī al-Zaman returned to Persia and was allowed to live in Azerbaijan. After the Ottoman Sultan Selim I briefly invaded Tabriz in 1514, he took Badī al-Zaman back to Istanbul, where he died one year later. The magnificent artistic and bibliophilic Timurid heritage over the course of the fifteenth century, with its production of manuscripts responding to ongoing developments in such techniques as stencils, painting, calligraphy, gold-speckled paper, filigree and lacquer binding, would be broadly influential in the manuscripts to be configured by upcoming artists.

TURKMENS (1380-1508)

The Qara Qoyunlu Turkmen⁸⁸ confederation, *ulus*, shook off Timurid suzerainty in western Iran after 1420. Shahrokh launched three campaigns between the years 1420 and 1435 in order to restore Timurid sovereignty over those territories. After Shahrokh's death, disputes over the succession in Herat finally gave Jahanshah b. Qara Yusof (d.1468), the new Qara Qoyunlu chief, the opportunity to secede from Timurid control and to rule in Azerbaijan, Fars as well as in eastern Anatolia.

Jahanshah's constant struggle for leadership with rival Aq Qoyunlu Turkmen confederation shackled his artistic projects with the exception of the Muzaffariya in Tabriz, also called the Blue Mosque. Built in 1465, the compound included a tomb, a cistern, a library and an adjoined dervish convent, *khanqah*. The Blue Mosque is celebrated for its unrivalled underglaze painted tile and mosaics that decorate both the interior and exterior of the building. Patterns are rendered in subtle colors with extensive use of cobalt blue as a ground for elegant inscriptions and arabesque designs in gold and white. The dome itself was a deep blue, stenciled with gold patterns. The monumental calligraphies of the Blue Mosque are attributed to Nematollah b. Muhammad al-Bawab⁸⁹, a pupil of Khalvati.

These subtle, jewel-like decors of the Blue Mosque epitomize the manuscript frontispieces made in Herat. A different situation occurs with Pir Budaq (d.1467) the eldest son of Jahanshah and consecutive governor of Fars and Bagdad, who was a dynamic patron of the arts. His first Shiraz *kitabkhana* was under the supervision of Shaykh Mahmud al-Heravi⁹⁰. Afterwards in Bagdad, Pir Budaq worked with several artists such as calligraphers Fakhr al-Din Ahmad Katebi and 'Abd al-Rahman Khawarazmi⁹¹ who created an innovative approach to *nasta'liq* writing.

The finely illustrated manuscripts, produced between 1456 and 1466⁹², reflect Pir Budaq's own taste through Khorasan pictorial conventions⁹³. Jahanshah was finally defeated and put to death in 1468 by the Aq Qoyunlu leader⁹⁴, Uzun Hasan (d.1478) who was the first Turkmen to declare himself independent sultan.

During his reign, patronage of the arts was feeble and subsequently, a provincial taste prevails in Turkmen painting. The use of a bright palette, less individualized figures and monotonous scenes is to be seen to such an extent that these works are designated as the "commercial Turkmen" brand.

Only Aq Qoyunlu Ya'qub b. Hasan Beg (d.1490) shows some greater expertise in the arts of calligraphy and painting during his relatively calm twelve-year tenure. His palace in Tabriz, called *Hasht Behesht* or Eight paradises, sheltered a promising book workshop, where renowned poets Baba Feghani Shirazi and Bannai, calligraphers Soltan 'Ali Qa'eni⁹⁵ (d.ca.1508), 'Abd al-Rahim "Anisi" and Fakhr al-Din Ahmad, along with painters Fazlollah Divana and Shaykh Naqqash deployed their talents. The paintings and drawings produced by artists Shaykh "Ya'qubi" Naqqash and Dervish Muhammad between 1478 and 1490 show Chinese patterns combined with elements of Persian repertoire.

Probably the most extraordinary work is the copy of *Makhzan al-Asrar* of Haydar Tilbe dedicated to Ya'qub Beg, done on Chinese colored paper with gold drawings and paintings attributed to Fazlollah Divana⁹⁶.

As a matter-of-fact a large quantity of material made by practitioners under Ya'kub Beg's rule is assembled in two albums stored in Istanbul⁹⁷. This same city is also home to one of the most heavily illustrated copies of the *Shahnama*, currently divided into two main volumes⁹⁸.

Executed in 1494 for Soltan 'Ali Mirza, a Qara Kiya ruler of Gilan, the work originally comprised 350 paintings; roughly forty of them were later removed from the manuscript. The paintings can be categorized into two different styles; the first are similar in manner to other late fifteenth century Turkmen works, the second style marks a unique departure from those contemporary models, notably the large figures with big heads, which has earned the manuscript the nickname "Big Heads Book of Kings".



SHAYBANIDS (1500-1598)

At the end of the fifteenth century Muhammad Shaybani Khan (d.1510) the grandson of Abulkhayr Khan, occupied Transoxiana⁹⁹ and established a solid Uzbek khanate. He became actively involved in the political dealings of the lands of eastern Timurid. His son and successor 'Obaydollah Khan (d. 1539) proclaimed Bukhara capital of the Shaybanid realm and embarked upon military actions against Khorasan and Khawarazm. On several occasions he gained control of Herat, but at each time he withdrew when confronted to Safavid retaliation. During his last invasion of Herat in 1529 he managed a forced movement of artists, primarily to Bukhara, thereafter making the Shaybanid principal cities the inheritors of the Timurid style.

Expressing a keen interest in manuscripts, 'Obaydollah Khan and his successors sought to emulate the Khorasan cultural achievements at their own courts, at the same time using it to legitimize their political rule over this vast territory. Bukhara grew to be a center of the arts that recalled the Herat school, due to the plundering of manuscripts and the employment of artists brought straight from Herat. Mahmud Mozahheb, Shaykh Zada¹⁰⁰, 'Abdollah Bukhari, Shaykh b. Molla Yusof Heravi, Mir 'Ali al-Hosayni, and Mahmud b. Ishaq Shihabi, all initially worked under the supervision of *kitabdar* Soltan Mirak Monshi (d.1533)¹⁰¹ at the *kitabkhana* of Bukhara.

The early manuscripts executed in book workshops on the periphery of the Shaybanid dominion were attached to local tradition and in some degree subject to aesthetic components previously used in Herat, with laminate margins and fine calligraphic text enclosed in broad rulings. The miniatures illustrating the chronicle of Shaybanids, *Fath-Nama* of Muhammad Shadi¹⁰² with seven painting from an unknown artist, and those contained in a copy of Hatefi's *Khsorow va Shirin*¹⁰³, both executed circa 1520, are representative of this early style¹⁰⁴.

This secondary *kitabkhana* activity between 1520 and 1550 was connected with Tashkent and Samarkand under the governorships of Soltan Keldi Muhammad (d.1533) and 'Abdolatif Khan. Illustrations found in an outstanding copy of *Kolliyat* of Navai from 1522¹⁰⁵, dedicated to Soltan Keldi Muhammad as well as those in a History of Abolkhayr of Kuhistani¹⁰⁶ made for 'Abdolatif Khan, both evoke a local creative stimulus rather than a Khorasan influence. From these examples it is possible to recreate the basic pattern attached to the illustrations of this provincial style, where scattered figures in bright attire are positioned in laconic scenery.

While in Bukhara, the court atelier-library benefited from the successive patronage of 'Obaydollah Khan, his son Abu-l Ghazi 'Abdolaziz Khan (d.1550) and his successor son Yar Muhammad (d.1561). Nearly all of the manuscripts of epic chronicles, poems, scientific and theological contents produced in Bukhara were illustrated and lavishly embellished. The miniature page compositions, stylistically still under the influence of Herat –especially those representing scenes of enthronement with their methodical hierarchy in the placement of the figures– were canonized by Bukhara artists, mostly on reworked manuscripts brought from Herat. The Sa'di's *Golestan*¹⁰⁷, copied by Soltan 'Ali Meshhedi in 1501 with six added miniatures in Behzad's style, is a paramount example of the skill of Soltan Mirak Monshi, the librarian of 'Abdolaziz Khan.

Undoubtedly the leading artist in the royal Bukhara *kitabkhana* was Mahmud Mozahheb, who according to Haydar Dughlat's *Tarikh-e Rashidi*¹⁰⁸, previously worked in the Bayqara *kitabkhana* at Herat. Mahmud Mozahheb was an accomplished calligrapher, illuminator- gilder, *mozahheb*, and painter who was commissioned to illustrate a large number of locally produced manuscripts and to rearrange other manuscripts previously brought from Herat. The result is an uneven variety of paintings that swing from the delicacy of his signed miniatures in a *Tohfah al-Ahrar* of Jami¹⁰⁹ dated 1538 and a *Bustan* of Sa'di dated 1549¹¹⁰, to far weaker miniatures of a *Rowzat al-Mohebbin* dated 1549¹¹¹. Nevertheless the works by Mozahheb demonstrate his inventiveness and his prowess as an illuminator.

All these Bukhara style paintings with their schematic figures of individuals or couples, relevant inscriptions in architectural decors and dedicatory inscriptions¹¹² in illuminated marginal cartouches, evolve after 'Abdolaziz's death in 1550. Subsequently, a peculiar illustration style emerges in Bukhara itself, including round faces with pronounced jaws, stern architectural compositions, ongoing landscapes and vivid colors.

The double page painting by 'Abdollah Bukhari enclosed in a *Bustan* of Sa'di with Mir Kulangi calligraphy made in 1576, during the de-facto rule of 'Abdollah Khan over Bukhara from 1557, and a miniature page in an Anthology¹¹³ are characteristic compositions of Bukhara school. 'Abdollah Bukhari's paintings are adaptations of well-known compositions by Behzad¹¹⁴ and he frequently depicts the same compositions in miniatures with a couple of lovers in a garden – a popular Bukhara trademark.

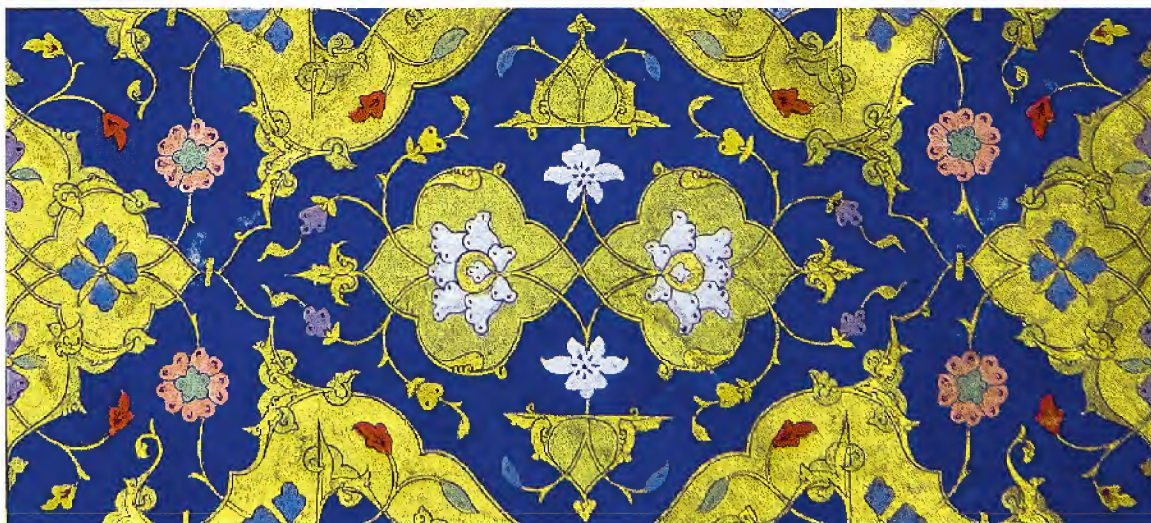
According to the inscription in an illustration from Sa'di's *Bustan* dated 1554¹¹⁵, 'Abdollah Bukhari was the librarian-director, *al-monshi al-kitabdar*, of the Bukhara workshop.

The royal patronage in Bukhara seems to have fallen into decay after the death of 'Abdollah Khan in 1598. Some artists from Bukhara then immigrated to India where manuscripts from the Bukhara royal library had been previously dispersed in large numbers as ambassadorial gifts or purchased outright by the Mughal royal house.

The Shaybanid arts of the book gave way to a transitional realistic style in the early seventh century under fresh patronage from Janids who were the offspring of the Toqay Timuri clan in Astrakhan. Painters Muhammad Morad Samarkandi, Muhammad Sharif and Muhammad Dervish infused a mannered liveliness into the illustrations in the same copy of a *Bustan* of Sa'di from 1616¹⁷⁶, all enhanced by rather curious color combinations.

A progressive dullness appears in miniatures produced after the 1664 *Shahnama*¹⁷⁷.

If one can sense a particularly difference solely in the paintings of Farhad¹⁷⁸ or Muhammad Moqim, their works alone are powerless to restore the luster of long ago Bukhara or to prevent the declining resourcefulness in Transoxiana, concretized in the early eighteenth century manuscripts.



SAFAVIDS (1501-1722)

In 1501, Shah Esma'il I (d.1524), the first Safavid¹⁷⁹ king, embarked on the conquest of all Iranian territories with the support of Turkmen Shi'ite tribes¹⁸⁰, or Qezelbash as they are commonly called. He initiated an irreversible process of political and religious change in Persia with the adoption of Twelver Shi'ism, *ethna-ashariya*, as the State's official religion¹⁸¹. This event will indeed exert a decisive influence on all aspects of Iran's society. Shi'a symbols were very important to the self-determination of the Safavids¹⁸².

Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili (d.1334) was the founder of the Safaviya Sufi order, *tariqa*, and hence is considered as the ancestor of the Safavid dynasty. From 1447 onwards, this order shifts from Sunni into Shi'a spectrum during the tenure of the fifth shaykh, Soltan Jonayd, the grand-father of Shah Esma'il I, who was killed in battle at Shirvan in 1455.

Shah Esma'il I chose the title of *morshed-e kamal* or perfect leader, and relied upon a network of *khalifat al-kholafa* who acted on behalf of the king, appointing representatives to the provinces¹⁸³ who referred only to the shah.

In what concerns the arts of the books, a discernible patronage by Shah Esma'il I takes place after he maintained the Turkmen Ya'qub Beg's *kitabkhana* in Tabriz. An early preview of this new Safavid style is perceptible on nine paintings that were added in 1505 to a manuscript of Nezami's *Khamasa*¹⁸⁴ that had been in progress since the year 1481.

The particularity of these paintings, which virtually continue the Turkmen style, is found in the individuals who wear the *taj-e haydari*, an emblematic Safavid turban¹⁸⁵ (see p.54).

Another manuscript related to this transitional period is a copy of *Jamal va Jalal* of Asafi Heravi (d.1517) with 34 paintings, of which two are dated 1503 and 1505¹²⁶.

The manuscript was copied at Herat during the author's lifetime. Bayani has tentatively identified the scribe as Soltan 'Ali Qa'eni. Since in most of the paintings the male figures wear the *taj-e haydari*, some scholars suggest it was illustrated in Tabriz.

Shah Esma'il I seems to have commissioned a *Shahnama* around 1515, but the only illustration that survives of the four paintings, executed before the project was abandoned, depicts the episode of "Sleeping Rostam"¹²⁷. This painting, with a profusion of vegetation, done on a minute scale with swirling blue clouds, recalls the Turkmen court painting at Tabriz. It is thought to have been painted by the young Soltan Muhammad, a native of Tabriz, before he became a significant painter during Shah Tahmasp's rule. According to Morikawa a copy of the Hundred Aphorisms of Imam 'Ali was written by Shah Esma'il I himself¹²⁸.

While remaining objects datable to Shah Esma'il I sovereignty are associated with his luxurious taste, only a few paintings and manuscripts from this period exhibit a more discernible style. At an early stage, these illustrations are connected with Turkmen and Timurid artist's workshops, but they tend to only slightly incorporate an innovative iconography, directly inspired by Esma'il thriving Shi'ite sensitivity. This monarch's only known collection of poetry, written in Azeri dialect under the pseudonym of Khatay, was compiled in a *Divan*. The oldest extant manuscript of this *Divan* is dated 1535, while an incomplete version, made according to some scholars during Shah Esma'il I lifetime, contains three paintings presenting idealized courtier scenes¹²⁹, possibly executed at Tabriz *kitabkhana*.

We ignore how this book workshop was managed, although we do know that Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Khazzani served for a time as director of this *kitabkhana*¹³⁰ from 1517 with the presence of calligraphers 'Abdi Neyshapuri¹³¹ and Shah Mahmud Neyshapuri, also known as *Zarin-qalam* or "golden pen" (see p.31).

Only towards the end of his life did Esma'il I realize the importance of leaving behind a cultural legacy. In 1513, Dormush Beg Khan Shamlu, Shah Esma'il's grand master of royal protocol¹³², a figure who may have played a role in the development of the king's taste, solicited Shah Hosayn Esfahani to build the shrine of Harun-e Vilayat, the first edifice to bear a *nasta'liq* inscription in Iran¹³³, accompanied with emergent traits that would be seen in upcoming Safavid architecture.

By 1522 the famous Kamal al-Din Behazd comes to Tabriz accompanied by the future king and former governor of Herat, Tahmasp, who brought with him a substantial body of manuscripts and artists. Behzad's royal appointment as *kitabdar* of Tabriz workshop was a symbolic gesture rather than a practical one due to Behzad's difficulty in taking part in any truly compelling activity¹³⁴. It can be said that Shiraz consistently remained since the fifteenth century an essential centre for the production of fine manuscripts, with certain individuals with noteworthy skills.

The calligraphers Mun'im al-Din, Musrshid and Na'im al-Din represent three generations of a single family: the Al-Auhadi's from Shiraz, whose works spanned the transitional manuscripts from Turkmen to Safavid's early years.

At least thirty-two of these works were copied by these three calligraphers¹³⁵ between 1485 and 1523, with flowing and elegant *nasta'liq* script. Miniatures on those manuscripts integrate Turkmen patterns and compositions with topical Safavid motifs, such as turbans and architectural representations.

Regarding the embellishment of manuscripts, the noteworthy figure in Shiraz was Ruzbihan Muhammad al-Ta'bi Shirazi, a calligrapher and gilder-illuminator, *mozahheb*, active between 1514 and 1547. His work is related to a number of preserved Qurans with fine illumination that reveals aspects of his specific style: strong use of large areas of red ground, minute geometric patterns and employment of two tones of gold on frontispieces, headpieces and *shamsa* (see p.58). Ruzbihan's calligraphy in those Qurans is fluid and well proportioned; in sum he was an absolute artist involved



in the production of religious manuscripts¹³⁶ of the highest standard. Shaykhi, Hosayn and Mahmud were also acknowledged gilders working in Shiraz.

With the enthronement of Shah Tahmasp, the elder son of Tajlu Khanom and Shah Esma'il, in 1524, the royal *kitabkhana* that he inherited continued to function under his influential taste. Tahmasp was a connoisseur of both the art of painting and calligraphy. He had been tutored in painting by Soltan Muhammad, copying, in 1525 at the age of eleven, a manuscript of *Guy va Chowgan* of 'Arefi, with an exquisite *naskh-e ta'liq* script¹³⁷.

Despite the civil unrest in Iran during 1524 and 1533 caused by Turkmen-Qezelbash clans and the treacherous Sunni Ottoman and Uzbek invasions, the young king Tahmasp regained most of his Persian inherited realm with the exception of Bagdad. He ultimately signs the treaty of Amasya with Sultan Solayman I in 1555. During the first half of Shah Tahmasp's reign, his life was dominated by two subjects of special significance: curtailing the Turkmen-Qezelbash clan's power in state affairs and developing a dynastic visual identity.

He took control of his government decisively. He appointed Qadi Jahan Qazvini viceroy, *vakil*, his half-brother Aqlas governor of Shirvan, his full-brother Bahram Mirza commander of the army and his other half-brother Sam Mirza governor of Khorasan.

Shah Tahmasp issued an edict of sincere repentance, *tawba*, in 1532 and again in 1556, forbidding himself and high officials from dissolute behaviors and impious activities. Supreme works of art were produced during the long rule of Shah Tahmasp¹³⁸ although his interest in the arts would wane from around 1560. The royal *kitabkhana* of Tabriz commissioned ambitious illustrated manuscripts. One of the projects was the outstanding Book of Kings by Ferdowsi, referred to in contemporary literature as the *Shahnama-e Shahi*¹³⁹, but probably begun in 1522 as a present from Shah Esma'il I to his eldest son, prince Tahmasp, who continued the project after his father's death. The final result is a masterpiece of artistic skill and royal patronage. Taking twenty years to complete, the 258 exquisite paintings are regarded as the magnum opus of Persian art. Elite artists from the royal *kitabkhana* made these illustrations under the supervision of three successive masters: Soltan Muhammad until 1527, Mir Mosavver until 1532 and finally, Aqa Mirak whose tenure ended in 1537.

Only two paintings are signed: the first bears the signature of Mir Mosavver and the other, added in 1540, is by Dust Muhammad, not to be confused with his namesake calligrapher who entered the service of Shah Tahmasp, a position he retained for the rest of his life¹⁴⁰ (see p.33).

Since the colophon is missing it is important to remark that the only date, 1528, is inscribed on one painting, but a dedicatory inscription in an illuminated ornament (f 16r) states that the manuscript was made at the Tabriz royal books workshop. The illustrations include both categories: those conceived by one single artist and those attributed to a main artist and an assistant. It is the opinion of Dickson and Welch¹⁴¹ that a team of fifteen artists, two calligraphers and two gilder-illuminators would have worked on the manuscript.

In addition to the artists already mentioned were, Mozaffar 'Ali, 'Abdolaziz, Mirza 'Ali b. Soltan Muhammad, Shaykh Muhammad, 'Abd al-Samad¹⁴², 'Abd al-Wahab, Qadimi and Qasem-i 'Ali. An examination of the illustrations reveals particular stylistic trends: spatial verisimilitude, fine brushwork, the rational placement of figures, elegant tile interiors, a peculiar lightness of the scenery and subtle coloring.

The Shah Tahmasp's Book of Kings itself changed hands several times before being dismantled and ending up in the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. Shah Tahmasp first presented it as a royal gift to Ottoman Sultan Selim II in 1568 at Istanbul, where it was once inventoried in 1801. Then, according to Soudavar, the manuscript returned to Iran, before it surfaced in 1903 with the de Rothschild family, who lent it for an exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. The manuscript was acquired in 1959 by Houghton Jr. who subsequently exhibited it on several occasions in America. Regrettably, in 1970, seventy-eight illustrations were transferred to the Metropolitan Museum of New York. Further dispersals and splits occurred over the next two decades, through auction and

private sales, until it finally reached Tehran in 1992, with the remaining hundred eighteen paintings, binding and text folios. Despite its current unbound condition, this *Shahnama* resolutely testifies to the royal splendor of Tahmasp. Another *Shahnama* was copied at a slightly earlier date, 1524, in Tabriz¹⁴³, with twenty-seven paintings, the work of at least five different artists representing singular visual styles, later to be known as early period Safavid style.

A supplementary manuscript which reveals the genuineness of the Shah's own beliefs is a copy of *Ahsan al-Kebar* of Ibn 'Arabshah¹⁴⁴, the first and foremost Persian text dealing with biographies of the Shī'a Twelve Imams.

Although this manuscript was executed in 1433 by the calligrapher Khezir Shah, the thirty-six added illustrations replicate the aim of Tahmasp to strengthen the official Shī'ite point of view early on in his reign. Of particular note is the painting dated 1526 and signed by Qasem-i 'Ali. Described as a master portraitist by the historian Qazi Ahmad, the miniature represents the first discourse of Imam Hasan b. 'Ali¹⁴⁵ who is depicted surrounded by a host of believers and executed with a realistic approach.

The monumental inscription on the mosque frieze seen in this painting reproduces the official title of Shah Tahmasp in Arabic. The artists and calligraphers working at Tabriz and at Qazvin around 1544, when Tahmasp established the royal seat there, were the most outstanding of their time. Soltan Mahmud Neyshapuri (d.1565) was a peerless calligrapher taught by his uncle 'Abdi Neyshapuri and a self-effacing person¹⁴⁶. Between 1539 and 1543 he wrote one *Khamisa* of Nizami, a true masterpiece of the arts of the book, commissioned by king Tahmasp¹⁴⁷. Among the fourteen illustrations of this *Khamisa*, several bear inscriptions of leading painters from Tabriz royal *kitabkhana*, namely Soltan 'Ali, Mirza 'Ali b. Soltan Muhammad, Aqa Mirak, Muzaffar 'Ali and Mir Sayyed 'Ali Tabrizi¹⁴⁸.

The style of these paintings—some sections of the manuscript, due to water damage, were repainted by Muhammad Zaman in 1675—exemplifies the maturity of classical Safavid art with its highly balanced compositions and modulated colors¹⁴⁹.

Soltan Mahmud Neyshapuri was also responsible for a Quran copied with *nasta'liq* script¹⁵⁰ in 1539, a *Selselat al-Dhahab* of Jami in 1541¹⁵¹, a *Golsetan* of Sa'di in 1551 and a *Khamisa* of Amir Khosrow in 1553. He was granted leave from the royal workshop and came to Mashhad where he stayed at the madrasa Qadamgah, writing an array of calligraphy specimens nowadays dispersed in different collections. At the time of his stay in Mashhad, the greatest benefactor of the arts was the prince Soltan Ebrahim Mirza (d.1577), a nephew of Shah Tahmasp, who married Gowhar-Soltan Khanom, the king's daughter. Ebrahim Mirza emerged as an essential sponsor of the arts of the book when he was governor of Mashhad, first in 1556, and again in 1565 when he was reinstated. He spent much of his time in the company of poets, calligraphers and painters. Therefore he adopted the pen name of "Jahi" to write poetry and popular songs. The *kitabkhana* that Ebrahim Mirza established in Mashhad operated with a more flexible approach than the royal one. His legacy of patronage of the arts is displayed in two illustrated manuscripts.

The colophons specify that both manuscripts were made for him by his *kitabkhana* in Mashhad. The earliest is a magnificent volume of Jami's *Haft Awrang* dated 1556-1565 with twenty-eight paintings¹⁵². Current scholars attribute these overloaded paintings to famous artists only on stylistic grounds¹⁵³. Without noticing there is at least one painting (f 211r), signed by Mozaffar 'Ali¹⁵⁴ an artist skilled in painting, calligraphy and gild-illumination active in Tabriz and Mashhad. 'Abdollah Shirazi was another member of the Mashhad princely book workshop and an intimate companion of Ebrahim Mirza. He executed most of the ornamental illumination as well as the marginal golden decorations in this impressive *Haft Awrang*. The headpiece of *Yusof va Zulaykha*, one of the seven poems included in this manuscript, contains the inscription "gilded by 'Abdollah".

A similar inscription appears in the frontispiece of Helali's *Sefat al-'Ashiqin* dated 1582 and commissioned by vizier Mirza Salman (d.1583).



It would seem that ‘Abdollah Shirazi was also responsible for the marginal golden decorations of another earlier *Sefat al-‘Ashiqin* produced in 1562¹⁵⁵.

The second manuscript commissioned by Ebrahim Mirza, was a copy of *Naqsh-e badi* of Gazali Mashhadi. During Ebrahim Mirza’s time as governor, only two miniatures were executed in Sabzavar in 1574¹⁵⁶. Another manuscript, if not directly commissioned by this Safavid prince, but related to him, is a *Haft Awrang* of Jami, copied in Qazvin by the former Mashhad chief librarian ‘Ali Mohebb al-Kateb and dated 1571¹⁵⁷. The double-page opening painting represents a princely feast in a landscape. It shows a royal figure who is seated on a platform mounted in a tree conversing with a princess. This could be an allegorical portrait of Ebrahim Mirza¹⁵⁸. One of the influential painters working at the time in Mashhad *kitabkhana*, was Muhammadi Beg. Although a group of tinted drawings and paintings bearing his signature open the way to understanding his mastery as an artist, very little reliable information exists about Muhammadi Beg’s life.

Alongside these tinted drawings, with their characteristic silver streams, pastoral scenes and interlinear gold patterns, Muhammadi Beg was illustrating manuscripts in royal and princely book workshops at Qazvin, Mashhad and Herat in his own particular style. He stands among the most sought-after and acknowledged painters who inspired both his contemporaries and the next generation in painting¹⁵⁹.

Bahram Mirza (d.1549), the full brother of Shah Tahmasp and the father of Ebrahim Mirza was another key member of the Safavid royal family.

Bahram Mirza was appointed governor of various provinces of the Safavid kingdom between 1529 and 1549. His artistic taste paralleled that of his elder brother Shah Tahmasp. Some artists worked for both brothers, such as Aqa Mirak, Mir Mosavver and Rostam ‘Ali Khorasani, the nephew of Behzad, who was the chief-master of Bahram Mirza calligrapher’s guild. The most important legacy of Bahram Mirza’s cultural patronage¹⁶⁰ is an album or *moraqqa’* assembled by Dust Muhammad (d.ca.1565) who wrote the preface. This appears to be the earliest known album with a compilation of calligraphy specimens and paintings conceived as one historical related sequence and a visual encomium.

For art historians this preface¹⁶¹ is a very important one, not only because the album gathers, in a chronological order, material from previously dispersed folios by master artists but above all because it provides short biographical accounts and accomplishments of artists with a synopsis of the album’s overriding material sequence.

This preface was inserted almost as an independent unit in 1544, which would indicate that an interval of time separated it from the last material included in the album. Bahram Mirza’s album compilation is indebted to his large collection of calligraphy specimens and paintings, now arranged within the 148 folios in the album.

The inner structure of Bahram Mirza’s *moraqqa’* displays discernible links to an earlier album assembled in the Timurid environment¹⁶².

In conclusion, this album contains specimens of practically all of the foremost artists from the past to the then present time, including an early illustration, removed from a Khawaju Kirmani’s *Khamsa*, painted in 1392 at Bagdad. The cultural projects undertaken by Prince Sam Mirza (d.1567), Shah Tahmasp’s half brother, also deserve mention. Shortly after his arrival to Herat as governor of Khorasan in 1522, illustrated manuscripts copied by Behzad’s talented students began to come to light. Sam Mirza returned to Herat in 1534 and was involved in an aborted rebellion against the Safavid king. Despite this iniquitous behavior Shah Tahmasp called him back to Tabriz, where he remained until 1549 when he was appointed governor of Ardabil.

The 1550 *Tohfa-ye Sami* or Sam’s present¹⁶³, written by Sam Mirza, contains biographical notices of Persian poets who flourished from the end of the fifteenth century up to his time. An illustrated version of Hafiz’s *Divan* related to Sam Mirza copied in 1529 contains an inscription in praise of this prince. Some of the five paintings in this *Divan* bear the signatures of Soltan Muhammad and Shaykh Zadah. Unfortunately the paintings are now dispersed in two different collections¹⁶⁴. Sam Mirza was

executed in 1567 by order of the Shah, after having been jailed in 1562 for failing to quell sympathies for a noxious uprising led in 1549 by his other half brother Aqlas Mirza.

The lives and accomplishments of Safavid calligraphers and painters were central to the period's cultural activity. The practice of embellishments, such as complex illuminated frontispieces and the sophisticated rendering of animals in combat, exuberant vegetation and otherworldly scenes brushed in gold on the margins of manuscripts, *tash'ir*¹⁶⁵, were in great expansion. Artists were able to experiment in the light of tentative theories of art within a specific framework under Safavid royal cultural patronage.

Khawaja 'Abdi Beg Shirazi (d. 1580), born and raised in Tabriz, was a secretary- accountant in the chancellery of Shah Tahmasp and also a poet under the pseudonym of "Novidi".

His poetical works are enclosed in a Quintet. One of the poems from this Quintet, the *Ayni-e Eskandar*, written in 1543, is of special interest¹⁶⁶. It contains a section called "Excellence of art" with depictions of script and painting interrelationships, the concept of *haft asl-e naqqashi* or seven modes of painting, followed by schematic notions regarding the art and studies of certain artists' works. Although Shirazi could claim to be the innovator on these matters, the originality of his theories are cast into doubt by later fractional inclusions in Dust Muhammad (1544), Qutub al-Din Qissakhavan (1557) and Mir Sayyed Ahmad (1565) album prefaces¹⁶⁷, which finally turned out to be by 'Abdi Beg Shirazi.

The "two *qalams* theory", as scholars Adle and Porter call it after the *Ayni-e Eskandari* section, is a hypothesis developed around the instrumentation of written and pictorial material. The creative power given to the *qalam* or reed of a calligrapher is connected to the *qalam-i mu* or brush employed by a painter. This assumption is more discursive than technical, but obviously enhances the broad distinction within the relationship between calligraphy and painting.

Another level of interpretation is attained when reading the passages in those aforementioned album prefaces devoted to the aforesaid seven principles of painting or decorative repertoire and their connection to the earlier six styles of calligraphy or *khatt-e shesh qalam*.

The terminology of these seven modes of painting differs from one author to another.

As translations leads to misinterpretation, all seven could have been 'Abdi Beg pundit creation, as he refers to them in his *Rawzat al-Sifat* without actually naming them. Gleaning from the above prefaces, these seven modes are to be found: *islami* or *islimi*, *khatay*, *abr*, *farangi*, *vaq*, *nilufar* or *fassali* and *band-e rumi* or *giri*¹⁶⁸.

It is unclear whether these terms refer to ornamental compositions or to the materials associated with decorative techniques. All these visual and theoretical tenants emphasize the fundamentals of Safavid art, creating precedents, customs and conventions to legitimize the artistic process.

Shah Tahmasp's increasing religious inclinations, his tendency to shun artists from the royal workshop and his chronic illness, created a climate of political uncertainty. From the 1560's onwards, Tahmasp spent much of his time at Qazvin palace. His interest in art diminished and he shifted his focus from big aesthetical projects, thus many artists sought employment in other book workshops. Nerveless, one of the most outstanding manuscripts produced during this period was a monumental copy of *Falnama* or Book of Omens with paintings by Aqa Mirak, a *sayyed* of Isfahan origin and the *kitabkhana* leader, *moqtada*, long associated with Shah Tahmasp. 'Abdolaziz and the calligrapher Malik Daylami (d.1562) also participate in this *Falnama*, of which only twenty nine pages still exist¹⁶⁹. Shah Tahmasp interest in the arts of the books continued, especially through gathering material for two *moraqqa'*; sadly never completed. Additionally we can mention a manuscript of Assad's *Garshasptnama* copied in Qazvin during the year 1573 by Mir 'Emad, with Muzaffar 'Ali, Sadeqi and Zayn al-'Abidin's innovative illustrations¹⁷⁰. On two occasions Tahmasp's illness brought him to the brink of death and yet he still refused to choose a successor.

Given the gravity of the situation, some of the Qezelbash clans' leaders chose Haydar Mirza as heir in 1574. Two years later, when Shah Tahmasp died, the former declares himself king.

As a result of factional rivalries among the Qezelbash supporters and the active role played by his sister, Pari Khan Khanom, Haydar Mirza failed to secure his ambition.

Ultimately it was another son of Tahmasp, Esma'il Mirza, who became king of Iran in 1576. Imprisoned since 1557, upon his liberation and ascension to the throne he took the name of Shah Esma'il II¹⁷¹. During his brief reign of only eighteen months, he purged the court of members of the Safavid royal house, including Prince Ebrahim Mirza¹⁷², before he himself was poisoned in turn. Shah Esma'il II expressed a personal interest in cultural and artistic matters. He appointed the calligrapher Muhammad Hosayn, son of late 'Inayatollah Tabrizi, *madar* or chief-master of the office for governmental buildings inscriptions, a position formerly held by Malik Daylami. According to Robinson, the only manuscript produced in the Qazvin royal workshop connected with Shah Esma'il II is an unfinished *Shahnama*¹⁷³ with 55 paintings attributed to 'Ali Ashgar, Sadeq Beg Afshar, Naqdi, Zayn al-'Abidin, Mawlana Mehrab and Siyavosh Beg¹⁷⁴ that deliberately turn away from previous painting styles.

The chronicler Eskandar Beg Monshi, states that Siyavosh Beg was brought from Georgia to Tabriz as a child, together with his brother, the future painter Farrukh Beg (d.1619)¹⁷⁵. Siyavosh Beg's style of painting, with his unequalled depiction of mountain scenes, more vegetal than mineral, reveals a penchant for dramatic well-organized compositions. He reportedly gave up painting around 1600. Veli Jan from Tabriz was among his students who later managed a prodigious career at the Ottoman court workshop.

A superb copy of *Habib al-Siyar* of Khvandamir in four volumes, executed in 1579-80 for Mirza Abu Taleb, with some volumes currently dispersed¹⁷⁶, was illustrated by Siyavosh Beg and Sadeq Beg Afshar. A copy of *Ajayebnama* of Tusi Salmani, also commissioned by Shah Esma'il II, with 210 Qazvin style miniatures painted in 1577, has recently come to light¹⁷⁷.

When the rule of Shah Esma'il II abruptly ended in 1578, it was his brother Soltan Muhammad Khodabanda (d.1588) who was enthroned in Qazvin. From the day he was declared king, his wife Khayr al-Nesa Begum, who held the title of *Mahd-e 'Olya* (the cradle of nobles) took charge of State affairs which only lasted a year, since the powerful Turkmen chiefs decided to get rid of her. During the ten years of Shah Khodabanda's weak reign a prevalent production of manuscripts took place, resulting in the blend of Qazvin *kitabkhana* style with that of other cultural centers such as Shiraz, Herat, Bakharz and Sabzavar. Fine illustrated manuscripts were produced for royal officers¹⁷⁸ and beyond the court patrons, consisting almost entirely of *Shahnama* copies, with stereotypical compositions and some originality in their paintings. Naturalistic figures, dynamic hunting scenes with stout horses, expressive vegetation and lines of text integrated into overpowering compositions are characteristic features of the Khodabanda period paintings, which also witnessed the popularity of using wider margins with tinted or gilt stenciled patterns. Calligraphy, on the other hand, undergoes a different and original treatment, due to the increased practice of collecting single sheet calligraphy specimens. The works of calligrapher Ekhtyar Monshi b. 'Ali al-Jonabadi (d. 1583)¹⁷⁹ provides a striking example of a different penmanship. He would stay for thirty years on the Safavid chancellery, copying documents for Khodabanda, who was the governor of Khorasan in 1536, and later in Qazvin at King Khodabanda royal chancellery. The *ta'liq* style of script developed by Ekhtyar Monshi for diplomatic epistolary, *maktubat*, and royal decrees, *faramin*, remains unequalled. He perfected this rapid and intertwining script that was well adapted for official and epistolary, *ensha*, documents.

The practice of this handwriting, predominantly round with smooth outlines in intricate page compositions¹⁸⁰, was employed well beyond the eighteenth century in Persia.

Baba Shah Esfahani (d.1588), a calligrapher who lived in Isfahan and Bagdad during the reign of Khodabanda followed a different path. Virtually little is known about Esfahani's life, except for his renowned *nasta'liq* script so highly prized by connoisseurs¹⁸¹. Esfahani wrote a treatise on calligraphy entitled *Adhab al-Mashq*,¹⁸² sometimes mistakenly attributed to master calligrapher Mir 'Emad, and he also copied a *Selselat al-Dhahab* of Jami¹⁸³ in 1569.

The next Safavid king Shah 'Abbas I (d.1629) realized soon after his accession to the throne in 1588, that he needed to impose his royal authority upon State affairs.

The administration of the kingdom was becoming increasingly centralized with the rise in power of loyal *gholams*. These were young Georgian, Armenian and Circassian captives, converted to Islam and trained for service in the royal household. This sporadic recruiting practice, which had been established under Shah Tahmasp, was called *gholaman-e khassa-ye sharifa* or crown servants. Shah 'Abbas I considerably reduced the power of Qezelbash clans by the gradual appointment of reliable *gholams* as military commanders, provincial governors and administrative chiefs. Amongst them the most important were Allahverdi Khan, Emam-Qoli Khan and Qarajaghay Khan¹⁸⁴. The delicate balance that Shah 'Abbas I maintained between the kingdom's multi-ethnic populations be they Persians, Turkmens, Azeris, Caucasians or Armenians¹⁸⁵, was the key to his success. In 1598 Shah 'Abbas I transferred the capital of the kingdom from Qazvin to Isfahan. Propelled by his passion for building, he undertook architectural transformations still visible in Isfahan today, as well as the embellishment of holy Shi'ite shrines in Mashhad and Ardabil. An important conceptual modification of the creative process in artistic expressions took place during his reign.

Shah 'Abbas I reoriented the royal *kitabkhana* in Qazvin by appointing Sadeq Beg Afshari (d.1606) as *kitabdar* from 1588 to 1597.

This poet and painter who sometimes signed "Sadeqi", was a disciple of Mir Sanai, and a protégé of both Prince Sam Mirza and the painter Mozaffar 'Ali. Sadeqi was active at Qazvin from the year 1565, alongside his contemporary, 'Ali Asghar Kashani. A painting from a Book of Kings made for Esma'il II and the frontispiece of a Hatefi's *Timurnama* are certainly by the hand of 'Ali Asghar.

Several manuscripts were produced under Sadeqi's supervision, mainly a *Shahnama*, now in fragments, commissioned by Shah 'Abbas in 1587 and finished in 1596, with illustrations by Sadeqi, Aqa Reza and 'Ali Asghar. The marginal golden drawings are attributed to Zayn al-'Abidin Tabrizi¹⁸⁶. This was followed in 1593 by his own copy of *Anvar-e Suhayli* of Kashifi (see p.116) with some 107 paintings by Sadeqi himself¹⁸⁷. Stylistically, both manuscripts replicate a crossbreed style using innovative figural compositions and saturated pigments. Even to the present day, Sadeqi's treatise *Qanun al-Suvar* or Canon of Paintings that he wrote in 1597 and which is devoted to the technicalities of painting with certain theoretical developments¹⁸⁸ is considered to be his major scholarly contribution. In this treatise, Sadeqi differentiates decorative painting, *naqqashi*, from figurative painting, *suratgar*.

The modular compositions of Canon of Paintings' chapters that includes, among other things, the tying of a brush, preparing different pigments and their mixing, silver and gold practices, varnish and lacquer painting, appears somewhat confusing. Nevertheless, Sadeqi's attempt to provide a promising theory of the arts, if not entirely satisfactory, certainly deserves to be considered as an important step forward in the history of Persian arts and crafts.

A treatise on the art of calligraphy and the book crafts with brief biographical notices on a selection of past and contemporary calligraphers and artists, entitled *Golestan-e Honar* or The Rose Garden of Art was written at approximately the same time. The author Qazi Ahmad b. Sharaf al-Din Hosayn Monshi Qomi had witnessed Ebrahim Mirza's *kitabkhana* production in Mashhad. He was able to collect information from his personal contact with artists working there as well as rely on early available sources. Today *Golsetan-e Honar* is considered an important primary source for the history of the arts of books in Persia. This treatise exists in two versions, one composed around 1598 and a second one around 1606¹⁸⁹. It was not until after the early years of Shah 'Abbas I's rule that Persian painting was subjected to transformations due to the combined effects of independent artistic production and the decreasing prestige accorded to manuscripts paintings.

Illustrations of the past used classical literature as the sole source of inspiration, in comparison with those produced from 1602 onward, when the royal *ketabkhana* was transferred to Isfahan, we noticed a different approach. The subordination of painting to narrative texts is no more a



fundamental concern *per se*. At the time, visual art forms and meanings embraced aesthetics related only to figurative representation. Drawings and paintings translated an infatuation of individual large format portraits; depicting clearly idealized young men and women, as well as elderly wise men (see p.92), with minutely detailed garments. These portraits with their invisible relation to book illustrations paralleled the salient aspects of the multifarious Iranian society of the time. Aqa Reza is the leading painter associated with these visual changes. Presumed to be the son of 'Ali Asghar Kashani, he became famous under the name of Reza-ye 'Abbasi (d.1635). Despite his independent temperament, Reza-ye 'Abbasi worked intermittently at the court of Isfahan producing paintings and drawings that portrayed elegantly dressed figures in a contemplative mood¹⁹⁰.

The ambiguity of his relationship to the court workshop suggests that the boundaries between court and independent artists may not have been as clearly drawn as has formerly assumed. Changes in the process of royal patronage during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, combined with the vast demand for single paintings, slowed down the production of illustrated manuscripts. In addition to his early collaboration on an unfinished copy of *Shahnama*, paintings of Reza-ye 'Abbasi can be found in at least two other manuscripts: a *Makhsan al-Asrar* of Khawarazmi dated 1618¹⁹¹ and a *Khamisa* of Nizami of 1632¹⁹².

The repertoire of themes during this transitional period became increasingly indebted to European models due to the availability of prints, oil paintings and decorative objects, brought in large number by travelers, diplomats and missionaries visiting Isfahan¹⁹³.

Reza-ye 'Abbasi never embraced European pictorial conventions, although in secret he took night lessons in Western painting techniques from the famous Armenian artist Minas¹⁹⁴ who was active in the Isfahan Armenian community. For other artists, Western works of art offered an opportunity of emulation, with selective use of receding perspectives and strong shading. The sumptuous silk lampas iconography of the textile weavers which was conceived and manufactured by great masters such as Ghyath al-Din 'Ali-ye Yazdi (d. 1592)¹⁹⁵, Mawlana Qutub al-Din and Hajji Mir 'Ali¹⁹⁶ never incorporated Western models. These textile patterns would become a source of inspiration for painters; predominantly for drawings or colour stenciled motifs used to ornate manuscripts margins¹⁹⁷. Shah 'Abbas I, like his father Khodabanda Shah before him, appreciated calligraphers to such an extent that he never hid his delight in spending time in their company. The most influential calligraphers during his reign were Mir 'Emad al-Hasani (d. 1615) (see p.85) and 'Ali Reza Tabrizi, who was still active around 1630. This latter calligrapher's first employment appears to have begun in Qazvin, executing monumental inscriptions and calligraphy specimens. 'Ali Reza, a tough man who adroitly outmaneuvered attacks on his power and who successfully protected himself from rivals, gained influence and the friendship of Shah 'Abbas I. Once his foe Sadeqi was dismissed, 'Ali Reza was appointed head of the royal workshop in Qazvin in 1598 and later in Isfahan. He began to sign his works with the epithet "'Abbasi". 'Ali Reza designed the inscriptions for certain mosques in Isfahan and also those for the golden dome of Astan-e Quds-e Rezavi, the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad, completed in 1606; as well as the former's set of epigraphic gold plaques affixed to the tomb of the same Imam¹⁹⁸. 'Ali Reza 'Abbasi's calligraphy specimens have a strong sense of proportion with an elegant shape¹⁹⁹.

Shah 'Abbas I refused to follow the tradition of previous Safavid kings who appointed their sons as provincial governors in order to allow them to gain experience under the tutorship of a guardian, *lala*. Instead he confined the royal princes to the harem, with the result that when the heir was finally called to the throne he proved to be incompetent and easily influenced. His grandson Shah Safi I (d.1642) was a diffident king whose rule was heavily influenced by Mir Damad, a shi'a high cleric. The atmosphere of discord and rebellion that prevailed during Shah Safi's reign aroused the king's suspicion and drove him to eliminate most of the members of the Royal house. No manuscripts from this period can be pointed to, with the exception of a copy of *Tarjoma-ye Suvar al-Kawakib*,

prepared for the powerful *gholam* ‘Abdolfatah Manuchehr Khan in 1631 at Mashhad²⁰⁰ with tinted drawings by Malik al-Hosayni. His successor, Shah Abbas II (d.1666) was able to escape from an extended childhood dependence upon the forces that dominated the harem and subsequently displayed great strength and determination. Abbas II was a builder king, though not on the scale of his grandfather Shah ‘Abbas I.

During the reign of ‘Abbas II, who commissioned several *Shahnama*, Muhammad Moqim headed the Isfahan *kitabkhana* for a time and the imprint of his seal is visible on an album page²⁰¹. A copy of Kashifi’s *Akhlaq- e Mohseni*²⁰² was executed when ‘Ali-Qoli Khan was appointed *kitabdar* of the *kitabkhana* in 1653. Shafi ‘Abbasi, the son and pupil of Reza-ye ‘Abbasi, was a gifted still-life painter and textile pattern designer²⁰³ who was very fond of painting works of flowers and birds, including one with a dedicatory inscription to Shah ‘Abbas II²⁰⁴. Accurate information regarding manuscripts directly associated with Shah ‘Abbas II is limited. Instead, various manuscripts were produced for aristocratic clients and here again the Book of Kings by Ferdowsi is the text that was the most frequently illustrated. Considerable evidence of an earlier patronage of the arts by Hosayn Khan Shamlu and his son Hasan Khan Shamlu, the successive governors of Herat, between 1598 and 1646, has recently come to light²⁰⁵.

The talents of calligrapher Muhammad Momin²⁰⁶ and the painter Habibollah Savaji²⁰⁷ were greatly appreciated by Hosayn Khan Shamlu. Manuscripts produced in Herat during Hasan Kahn Shamlu’s governorship show illustrations with energetic figures, tumultuous landscapes and two-dimensional architecture. The calligrapher Shah Qasem al-Kateb copied several poetry manuscripts for Hasan Khan Shamlu, noticeably a Quintet of Nezami.

Also to be found in Khorasan is an extensively illustrated *Shahnama* for the governor, *beglarbeg*, Qarajaghay Khan²⁰⁸, which was later on presented to Queen Victoria in 1839 by Kamran Shah of Herat. While an album, dated from 1648 was made entirely at Mashhad, with paintings by Malik al-Hosayni, his son Muhammad ‘Ali²⁰⁹, Muhammad Yusof and Muhammad Qasim. The life of Muhammad Yusof al-Hosayni (d.1666) is documented only by stylistic attributions and by the different ways he signed his name²¹⁰. He was a prolific artist during the reign of Shah Abbas II in Herat, in Isfahan from 1648 and later on in Mashhad. His paintings fall into two groups: the early part of his career was spent at Herat under Hasan Khan Shamlu’s patronage where he produces works of typical graceful tall figures with naturalistic faces, wearing brocaded garments. The second group, from a later period, shows a radical stylistic change to be seen on several single-page monochromatic lineal drawings that display outstanding draftsmanship.

This change may have resulted from exposure to the work of Muhammad Qasem, with whom he collaborated on several manuscripts²¹¹. Like other seventeenth century contemporary painters in Isfahan, Muhammad Qasem (d.1659)²¹² introduced modeling and shading into his works, but his draftsmanship tends to be more conservative and fond of calligraphic outline. Muhammad Qasem’s energetic treatment of plump vegetation, striated contours, protruding rocks and suggestive faces are characteristic of his visual strength; represented at his best on single sheet tinted drawings, nowadays dispersed²¹³.

The most celebrated artist of the period, however, was Mo’in Mosavver (d.ca.1697), a talented pupil of Reza-ye ‘Abbasi, and a prolific artist who participated in numerous illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts in the years from 1640 to 1693. In these illustrations elegant figures within reduced landscapes appear as ornamental icons painted with a distinctive palette of pink, violet, and ginger and acid yellow. Original works by Mo’in Mosavver, either manuscripts illustrations or single-sheet paintings, sometimes bear his peculiar signature, written in spidery black letters²¹⁴.

The increasing demand for single drawings and paintings for inclusion in albums created a full time activity for artists to the point of becoming practically their sole enterprise.

Paintings represented standing young men and women in the fashionably languid pose holding wine bottles, cups, manuscripts or flowers (see p.120). The artistic activity in Isfahan around the last quarter

of the seventeenth century continued through independent painters who managed to retain the favors of the court and who departed from the established convention of classical Safavid painting. Amongst them was Shaykh 'Abbasi, a painter whose works between the years 1650 and 1684 are signed with a flattering formula, permitted by his first patron, Shah 'Abbas II.

The soft restricted colors he used in figures with smooth and stippled faces enhanced by pronounced dark eyes exemplify his distant relation with the Europeanized pictorial idiom in fashion at the time. Though the small villages among wooded hills reproduced in his landscape background paintings recall Italianate towns. Shaykh 'Abbasi's works were chiefly watercolor portraits of rulers, princes, youths and courtiers compiled in album pages²⁵. His sons Muhammad Taqi and 'Ali Naqi were also painters and they too continued to practice the graded modeling style of their father.

The artists Muhammad Zaman and 'Ali-Qoli Jiba-dar typify at best this pictorial approach with the advance of innovative concepts in painting of post-European models, Mughal and conventional Persian values. There are no literary references for Zaman, but debatable biographical sketches by modern authors Irvine, Zoka and Diba²⁶. Muhammad Zaman was a painter active from 1649 until the end of the century. The date of his death is inferred by the inscription "1701" in a pen box done by his son Muhammad 'Ali. Works produced by Zaman when he was in favor at the court of the next Safavid king Shah Solayman (d.1694) frequently represent different subjects and themes. This goes from miniatures added between the years 1675 and 1678, to two Safavid royal copies of *Shahnama* and *Khamasa* of Nezami (see p.78) to commissioned illustrations in manuscripts²⁷ and finally to several lacquered and painted pen boxes, often bearing a pious Shi'ite invocation in Arabic as his punning signature "Ya sahib al-zaman"²⁸ or "O Thou the Master of Time". The fact that Muhammad Zaman made derivative paintings from Mughal models can no longer be denied. Inscriptions on three of those kinds of paintings mention that they were executed by Zaman for the royal Office, *sarkar-e homayun*.

Muhammad Zaman's innovative compositions with their stylistic nucleus reflect a wider taste shared with other contemporary artists. Amongst them was 'Ali-Qoli Jiba-dar, a painter with an uncertain identity. It is often assumed that he was a European painter who had come to Iran.

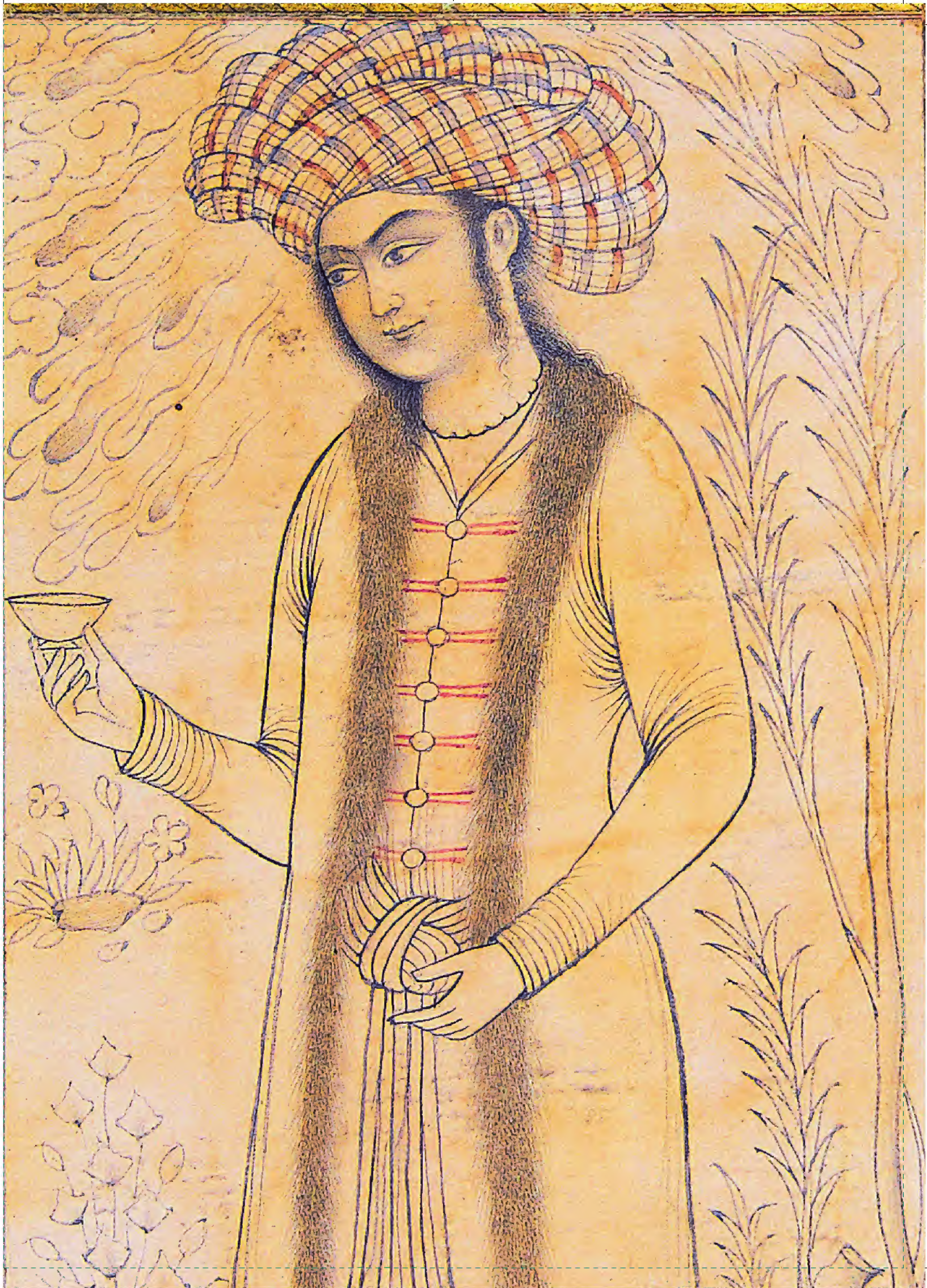
A foreign artist by this name who converted to Islam is referred to in the *Ateshkada* of Azar Baykdili (d.1781)²⁹. The correct spelling of his name differs between "Jobba-dar" and the more accurate "Jiba-dar", which in Safavid times was the title of the Chief of the Armory.

The core of 'Ali-Qoli Jiba-dar comes from paintings assembled in two *moraqqat*, the so-called "Saint Petersburg" and "Davis" albums³⁰, plus single paintings preserved in private and public collections. In both albums Jiba-dar's paintings depicting Persian court figures and European or Mughal India based models are executed in a different manner.

The paintings representing Persian royal events in the Saint Petersburg album show a king, perhaps Shah Solayman, hunting or gathering in the company of courtiers, musicians and attendants. All of the figures are drawn with marked outlines, slim waists and elongated silhouettes, with shading on their faces and graduated warm colors set against grisaille background. 'Ali-Qoli Jiba-dar's distinctive signature appears framed on several occasions. Above some of the figures are inscriptions in Georgian with their names.

Another interesting feature is the fur hat, *borq*, worn inside out by attendants, a fashion that originated from the time of Shah 'Abbas I. The more skilled appearance of European and Mughal theme paintings in these albums, suggest that Jiba-dar was acquainted with European artistic practice and prints. Distant grisaille figures and buildings in the landscape emphasize this point. Finally, it can be said that the style used by Zaman, Jiba-dar and to a lesser degree Shafi' 'Abbasi, provide the successful techniques that would be developed by the next generation of painters.

The last Safavid ruler, Shah Soltan Hosayn (d.1722), had an unpromising involvement with the arts of the book, except to welcome the works of Mirza Ahmad Nayrizi (d.1742).



Mirza Ahmad Nayrizi²²¹ was a disciple of Aqa Ebrahim Qumi and an extremely successful and sought-after calligrapher, active in Isfahan.

His practices with *naskh* script lead to the creation of a new style, called *Irani-e naskh*, with well balanced flat and rounded letters.

Nayrizi copied nearly one hundred Qurans with this script, which went on to become the standard script used for Qurans throughout the Qajar period. Furthermore some level of creativeness is discernible in royal firmans at the time, written with an elegant *shekasta* script²²². Shah Soltan Hosayn fell under the spell of Mulla Baqir Majlesi, the appointed Shaykh al-Islam (see p.109) and he often resided at Farahabad, when not spending time in Kashan and Qazvin. When he returned to Isfahan he was unable to resist the Afghan invasion of his capital and the Safavid kingdom fell in 1722.

Throughout its long existence, the Safavid painting style underwent some adjustments.

It appears to have gained not only marked prestige among scholars and connoisseurs, but also to have established a sense of faithful compositional canons, becoming one of the essential constituents in the Persian arts of the book.

AFSHARIDS / ZANDS (1736-1794)

Nader-Qoli Beg, a leader of the Afshar tribe, freed Persia from ruinous Afghan domination in 1729 and three years later he was able to depose the nominal Safavid king Tahmasp II and install Shah Abbas III (d. 1749) on the throne, naming himself regent. Nader-Qoli Beg's power was so firmly established that he himself ascended the throne in 1736 as Nader Shah (d. 1747)²²³. In 1739 he defeated the Indian army and his soldiers plundered the city of Delhi, bringing back to Iran a large booty that included numerous manuscripts and Mughal jewels²²⁴. Nader Shah distanced himself from Safavid tradition and religious associations by transferring the capital from Isfahan to Mashhad and by giving priority to tribal military might. During the rule of Nader Shah, fine arts mirrored the political fragmentation of the realm, with resourceful artists working in the provincial centers of Shiraz, Tabriz and Khorasan. The nature and concept of a book workshop itself promoted by royal patronage evolved and the new position of chief-painter laureate, *naqqash-bashi*, became customary. Muhammad 'Ali (d.1750), the grandson of the painter Jiba-dar, was the first one to hold this position²²⁵. His noted talent for portraiture is evident in a painting, circa 1735, of Nader Shah riding a horse and wearing the *kolah-e naderi*, also called *taj-e tahmazi*, a four-peaked enfolded hat of his own invention, evocative of the first four Caliphs²²⁶ and a purported symbol of the reconciliation of Sunni and Shi'a faith. The profusion of examples of portraits of this monarch forms a popular visual corpus that was appreciated by Iranian and Hindustani painters. This includes an oil painting, something less unusual at the time²²⁷, executed in 1739 by Muhammad Reza-ye Hindi at Isfahan, showing Nader Shah seated on a carpet²²⁸. A gouache portrait of Nadir Shah standing and holding a mace²²⁹ signed by Bahram "*naqqash-bashi*" and dated 1743 indicates that this no otherwise known painter served for a time as chief-painter laureate, perhaps when Muhammad 'Ali's eyesight weakened and he returned to Mazandaran.

Illustrated manuscripts associated with the patronage of Nader Shah are difficult to locate, only two related manuscripts exist from roughly the same period. They are an '*Alamara-ye Naderi* of Kazem Mervi²³⁰ completed in Khorasan before 1755, with hesitant provincial style miniatures, kept in a Russian public collection and a *Tarikh-e Jahangosha-ye Naderi*²³¹ of Mirza Muhammad Mahdi Khan Astarabadi (d.1760) with thirteen illustrations, executed in 1757²³². Astarabadi was Nader Shah's court secretary, *divankhana bashi*, and his official historiographer, who wrote this important chronicle of the events of Nader's life in florid language around the year 1750. The aforementioned "Saint Petersburg" album, probably compiled under Astarabadi's supervision between 1735 and 1759,

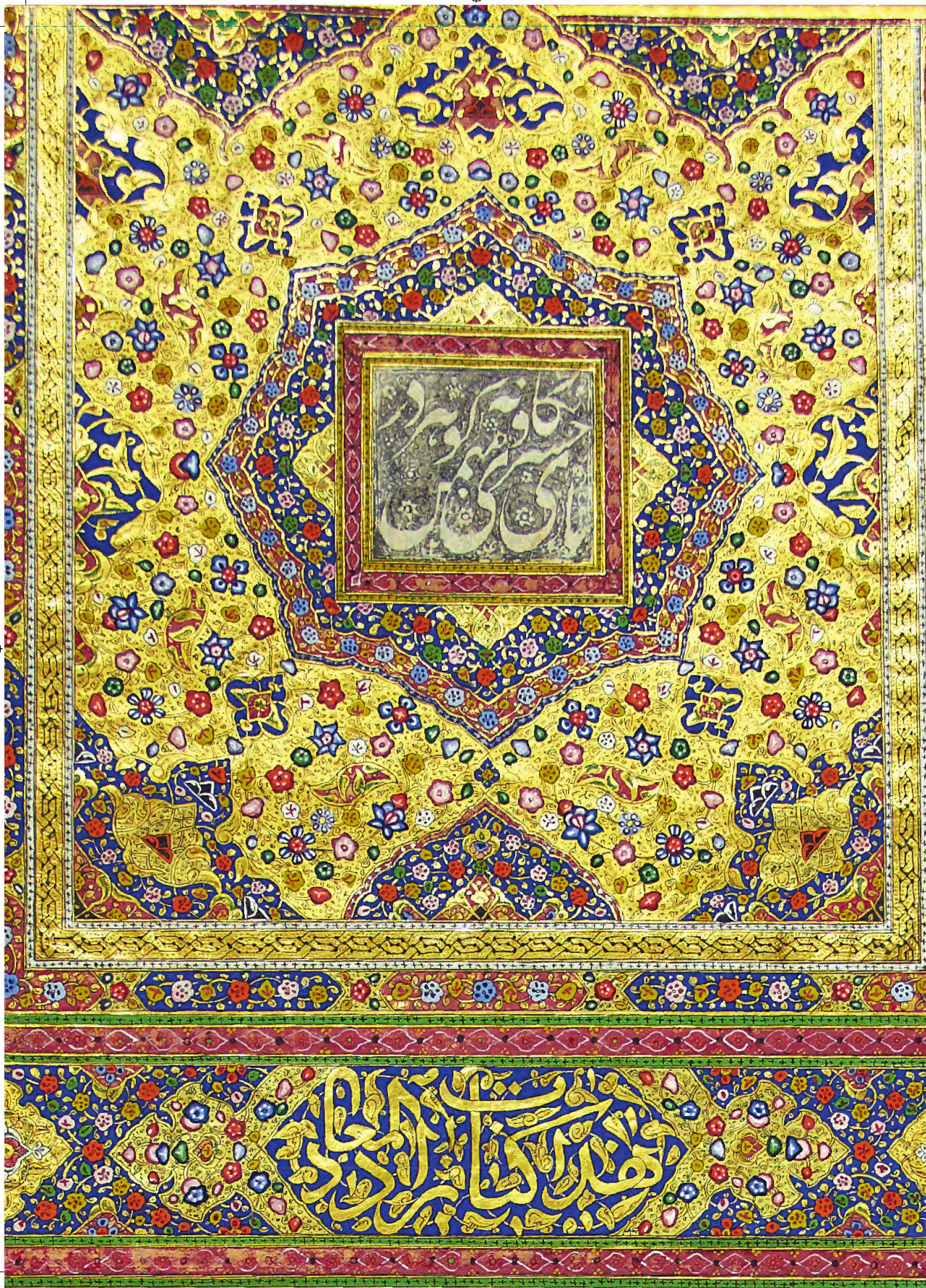
contains seventeenth century works from Mughal painters and Safavid calligraphers, together with paintings from artists active at the time of completion. Mirza Khan Astarabadi was a passionate bibliophile²³³, and the main purchaser of works of art from the Mughal booty brought back to Mashhad by Nader Shah's soldiers. According to Akimushkin's savant description of the Saint Petersburg album²³⁴, the intricate marginal decoration of pages and also the lacquer-painted front and back binding covers were realized by important contemporary artists.

The painter Muhammad Hadi worked at an early stage on the marginal decoration of at least ninety-five folios, his signature with the dates 1747, 1756 and 1759 are visible on some pages. This painter, along with 'Ali Ashraf, executed the Saint Petersburg album lacquered covers in 1735. Muhammad Hadi alone made the lacquer-painted binding of *Tarikh-e Jahangosha-ye Naderi* manuscript mentioned above. The painter Muhammad Baqir, who signed at least 24 ornamented margins from this same album with only one that is dated 1758, also executed one painting inside the album. Muhammad Sadeq also contributed to the ornamentation, while several single paintings in the album, aside from the Mughal period ones, are the works of Muhammad Zaman, his brother Hajji Muhammad, 'Ali-Qoli Jiba-dar and 'Ali Ashraf. A similar album assembled with paintings by the same artists, including the earliest known work of Jiba-dar dated 1658, was dispersed at auction²³⁵. Since royal commissions are untraceable, the principal artists of this era are associated with local powerful rulers from the provinces of Fars, Azerbaijan and Khorasan.

Their pictorial tradition overflows the Afsharid period and continued with Zand production of lavish lacquered and painted pen boxes, mirror cases and bindings. In June 1747, after Nader Shah was killed during a plot led by Afshar and Qajar officers, the struggle over his succession embroiled Persia in civil war. At the time, Karim Khan, Abd al-Fath Khan and 'Ali Mardan Khan reached an agreement to share power under the nominal rule of King Esma'il III, but this agreement soon fell apart. Karim Khan was ultimately victorious, gaining control of Persia—except in Khorasan where Shahrokh, grandson of Nader Shah, managed to stay in power until 1795. In 1750 Muhammad Karim Khan adopts the title of *vakil-e raya* (people's advocate) refusing to be enthroned as sovereign.

He made Shiraz his capital and ruled with a genuine concern for the welfare, prosperity and stability of the country. The short rule of Karim Khan left little opportunity for schools of painting to flourish and develop. Naturalistic and realistic portraiture was the foremost practice at the time. A brilliant example of this is the portrait of Karim Khan smoking a waterpipe with his kinsmen²³⁶ attributed to the aforementioned Muhammad Sadeq, a pupil of 'Ali Ashraf and a renowned court painter at Shiraz. His name has become synonymous with the Zand style and he produced several oil paintings, including two signed works depicting lovers drinking at a window and a prince on horseback attacked by a dragon. Sadeq punning signature was the Shi'ite invocation in Arabic "*Ya sadiq al-Wa'd*" or "O Thou who are truthful to Thy promise" seen in a gouache portrait of Karim Zand²³⁷ and in one oil painting of a girl playing a setar²³⁸.

However Abu-l Hasan Mostofi Ghaffari, the Zand court secretary, the author of *Golshan-e Morad* and the founder of a line of Kashan painters, executed two portraits of Karim Khan, one with his groom in Isfahan royal square and the other on horseback²³⁹. In all probability these may have been commemorative portraits commissioned after the ruler's death. A few records exist of calligraphers involved in manuscripts production, during this transitional period, principally Hajji Mirza Muhammad Hamadani and his son 'Ali Asghar, active in Isfahan between 1780 and 1800, who they produced amongst others, a Sa'di's *Kolliyat* in 1788, commissioned for prince Baba Khan, the future king Fatih-'Ali Shah and an anthology of poetry dated 1791²⁴⁰.



QAJARS (1779-1924)

After Muhammad Karim Khan's death in 1779, civil unrest broke out once more in Iran.

Agha Muhammad Khan (d.1797), was the leader of the Qajars who set out to overrun the Persian realm. After eliminating all his rivals, he was formally crowned shah in 1796.

The Qajar dynasty that spanned the next one hundred and twenty years would rule from their new capital of Tehran. The artistic style of Qajar originates outside their historical period for it was the late Safavid and Afsharid style that began to shape what would become known as the Qajar style. The forerunner was the previous painter Muhammad Sadeq, who, like most of next generation Qajar painters, worked in various mediasuch as oil on canvas, miniatures and lacquered and painted items²⁴¹.

The finest artist representative of the Qajar style was the painter Mirza Baba (d.1810) from Isfahan, who was already working for the Qajar family at Astarabad in 1798. Mirza Baba, a pupil of Sadeq, painted remarkable large-scale oil portraits of Agha Muhammad's successor, the great King Fatih-'Ali Shah (d.1824) who appointed him *naqqash-bash*²⁴². He also executed several canvases depicting royal figures, dancing girls and young romantics that sometimes intentionally echoed his master's compositions. Mehr-'Ali (d.1815), Abdollah (d.ca.1855), Sayyed Mirza, Lotf-'Ali Khan and Najaf-'Ali²⁴³ were contemporary artists whose mutual contention stimulated the vast Qajar style production of oils on canvas, frescoes and lacquer-painted objects. The latter consisted of coating pasteboard or papier-mâché with fine plaster, upon whose surface was painted in gouache before covering the whole with varnish. At the time, manuscript illustration receded into the background, with the noteworthy exception of Fatih-'Ali Shah's Divan²⁴⁴ and Saba's *Shahanshahnama* manuscripts²⁴⁵. Fatih 'Ali Shah composed poems under the penname "Khaqan" and he promoted the Royal Society or *Anjoman-e Khaqan*, a literary circle best known for reviving classical Persian poetry. During the successive reigns of Muhammad Shah (d.1848) and Naser al-Din Shah (d.1896) the realistic painter Abu-I Hasan Khan Ghaffari (d.1866) deserves a more in-depth treatment. He was a pupil of Mehr-'Ali and a member of the Ghaffari family's line of painters from Kashan.

An early portrait of Muhammad Shah secured him a position as court artist, and in 1850, when he returned from study travel around Europe Shah Muhammad named him *naqqash-bashi* as a successor to Muhammad Ebrahim. Abu-I Hasan designed and supervised a team of thirty-four painters who illustrated a Persian version of the Arabian Thousand and One Nights or *Hazar o yek shab*²⁴⁶. He also executed a series of single portraits of Qajar princes and statesmen with naturalism and technical perfection.

In 1861 Naser al-Din Shah bestowed him with the title of *Sani' al-Molk* or artist of the realm, by which he is usually known. Abu-I Hasan painted seven large-scale wall panels for the Nezamiya palace²⁴⁷, depicting Naser al-Din Shah surrounded by sons, courtiers and attendant foreign ambassadors, with their costumes and faces meticulously painted. Obviously Abu-I Hasan was inspired by 'Abdollah Khan's famous 1812 frescoes in the Negarestan palace depicting an idealized version of the royal celebration of Now Ruz (New Year's) showing Fatih-'Ali Shah enthroned and flanked by his sons and courtiers.

Sani' al-Molk becomes supervisor of the official establishments for printing and publishing. Muhammad Ghaffari, the nephew of Abu-I Hasan Khan Ghaffari, was a noteworthy late nineteenth century painter. He was also known by the name of *Kamal al-Molk* or exquisite of the realm, and his many genre scenes and portraits enhance the Europeanized style predominant in Qajar painting.

Another artists' family specialist in painted lacquer was the Esfahani, consisted of Najaf-'Ali, his brother Muhammed 'Esmail, who attained the title of *naqqash-bashi* and his sons Muhammed Kazem, Ja'far and Ahmad. Their works sometimes includes Christian subjects, but mostly were variations on the rose and nightingale theme, *gol o bolbol*, spans the period 1815-1890. Calligraphy and manuscripts followed a different path following the substantial adoption of *shekasta* script by Qajar calligraphers. Initially this script can be traced back to experimental devices practiced by

the calligrapher Muhammad Shafī' (d.1671), a disciple of Mir 'Emad, and the perfect consistency obtained later on by Darvish 'Abd al-Majid Taliqani (d.1771)²⁴⁸.

This distinctive and swift script allows the writer to copy manuscripts, official correspondence and documents rapidly. Among the great number of Qajar calligraphers who practiced *shekasta* script only a handful were salient. Notably Abo-I Qasem Qaemmaqam Farahani (d.1836) who simplified this script into *shekasta-ye tahrir*, and Muhammad al-Shirazi, whose works, produced between the years 1838 and 1852, surpassed the average practice and are considered paramount by collectors. Shirazi was entrusted by Fatih-'Ali Shah with the title of *Katab al-Soltan* or royal scribe²⁴⁹. On the other hand the large and bold *nasta'liq* calligraphies by 'Abd al-Hosayn Khawansari were much appreciated by Naser al-Din Shah, who asked that he trace the inscriptions of the shrine of Shah 'Abd al-'Azim in Tehran. Calligraphy specimens by Gholam Reza (see p.76) and Esma'il Jalayer's epigraphic paintings were among the most sought-after. Jalayer, a great favorite of Naser al-Din Shah, was a gifted artist and a teacher at Dar al-Funun academy, the art school established by Naser al-Din Shah in 1851. In his portraits and paintings calligraphy is always intervening within backgrounds filled with flowers, foliage and pastoral scenes, rendered with soft colors in a detailed manner²⁵⁰. Another calligrapher who attracted Naser al-Din Shah's attention was Mirza Kalhor (d.1892), who declined to work under royal appointment, preferring to work instead for private customers. His *siyamashq* exercises are considered among the finest examples. Kalhor introduced innovations that had a direct impact on the contemporary way of writing *nasta'liq* script. Although not directly related to the artistic production of Qajars, the *Moraqqā'-e Golshan*²⁵¹ merits highlighting.

This fabulous album of Persian, Mughal and Ottoman masters' paintings, drawings and calligraphy is considered a hallmark of artistic taste.

According to Jones Brydges it belonged to Mirza Hosayn Wafa Farahani, a learned bibliophile and vizier of Fars until 1792, before being owned by Naser al-Din Shah when he was still the crown prince in Tabriz.

It is difficult to determine exactly how many folios were contained in the initial compilation of the album²⁵² since later on several pages were removed and other pages were added from another album also having belonged to Naser al-Din Shah²⁵³. A third album reputed to have been made for this same ruler in 1888, almost entirely with pages of colorful calligraphy and margins decoration made with cut out paper, *qat'e*, unfortunately ended up with its pages dispersed at auction²⁵⁴. As a whole the Qajar style, which was an eclectic court art mainly developed during Fatih 'Ali Shah reign, was intended to revival Iran past glories.

The auspicious establishments of *kitabkhana* in Persia, almost seven hundred years ago, created a particular visual aesthetic in the art of painting, sliding between conservative and innovative features. Such an unambiguous array of images and calligraphy continuously produced during successive dynasties increased by the aggregate production of wonderful manuscripts, stimulate the perceptual activities associated with reading. The achievements of the book workshop are interrelated with royal patronage of their excellent practitioners, all housed in a single place over time. This artistic process enthused individuals who provided a munificent legacy of manuscripts for next generations.

► HOMAYUN-NAMA OF ZOJJAJI

Hakim Zojjaji (d.ca.1298)²⁵⁵ was a prodigious orator, *sokhnavaran*. He is the author of the *Homayun-nama*, also called *Tarikh-eManzum*, which he dedicated to ‘Ala al-Din ‘Ata-Malek Joveyni (d.1283) the governor of Baghdad and the author in 1260 of *Tarikh-e Jahangusha*²⁵⁶. Both works are firmly rooted in the Persian literary tradition of official court histories of the Mongol period. The *Homayun-nama*, written in the same *motoqareb* metre as that of *Shahnama*, contains a historiography extending to Khorezmshah Jalal al-Din (d.1231), including biographies of the early prophets, the story of the life of Prophet Muhammad, that of the first four Caliphs as well as the chronicles of some Islamic dynasties. The present manuscript was copied during Zojjaji’s lifetime. According to the inscription on the opening page’s roundel ex-libris it was specially made for the library of Shams al-Din (Joveyni). The Joveyni brothers belonged to an influential family of men of the pen and statesmen who held high positions in the government under Seljuk, Kavarazmshahiyan and Ilkhanid dynasties. Shams al-Din, also known as Saheb Divan, served as grand vizier to three Ilkhanid rulers from 1262 to 1284. This manuscript is not only the solely extant copy of *Homayun-nama* with the first volume²⁵⁷ but above all it is a rare corporeal witness of the production of early manuscripts in Baghdad. The text of the double-page frontispiece is framed at four sides with rectangles. Those above and below contain an inscription in Arabic written in ornamental *kufic* script against a russet ground filled with interlacing golden scrolls with at each extremity a square adorned with diamond point pattern in gold and brown. The rectangles to the left and right side of the text contain lobed cartouche motifs filled with roundels and arabesques in brown, red, green and lapis-lazuli. The penmanship and decorative configuration of this manuscript, probably made circa 1280, adhere to the early book production under Mongol rule in Iraq just before the Tabriz scriptoria achievements a few decades later.

Accession N° 561. Folio 2a

Manuscript, 253 leaves, 25 lines per page written in black *naskh* script, arranged in two columns with polychrome rules. Opening double-page with ex-libris of Shams al-Din (Joveyni), and illuminated double-page frontispiece in polychrome and gold. Brown leather binding stamped with gold. Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper. 29 x 21,5 cm
Bagdad, Ilkhanid period, circa 1280

داده شست از روز و در دین
چو خورشید بر جرخ شد ای در یک
چو جود از دود شب حیرت شد
بهرش بر آرد کرد و ز کلام
سپیده دم از کرد رخسار دور
جو صبح آنکس شکستی و و بر آن
رسد در شد جاذب قیرو مشک
بکافور زد ز کیرد ایوان و قیر
بخنجش ستاند ز انجم سبزه
شب ییره چون کرد از روز است
بر آرد تلک شیخ نور از قربان
چو کرد جهان سبز بر ز فون
در آید جهان مجود ز با جوش
سنایش کن از ای جان آفرین
معنی روان بر و رانده است

کافور و مشک این در روز و در
شب ییره ز کئی و مرا اندازد رنگ
سواره جراح شب ییره شد
از مغفک دری یافد و صبح
بیشین بخور شد کسور و فود
از روز و در شد جاذب قیرو مشک
فشانند ز رخسار و خط کحل
کفایت در میان شب و جود
نماید بخور شد یافد و صبح
شک و در و در و در و در
حاصل نماید ز بر و بر
شود روی کیتی و رخسار جود
بر آید زهر و آدیمی صد حوش
بدان ما توانش آید بد و بد
خرد را بد است رساند و است

► ALEXANDER ROMANCE FRONTISPIECE

The universally acclaimed poet Nezam al-Din Abu Muhammad Elyas b. Yusof, mostly known as Nezami (d.1209), wrote the *Eskandarnama*, a poetical version of the life of Alexander the Great²⁵⁸ near 1194. The first component, to which this frontispiece belongs, is called the Book of Nobility, *Sharafnama*. The second one is named Book of Fortune, *Eqbalnama*, although there is not enough evidence to prove that it was Nezami himself who used this division in his poem. The Alexander Romance poem forms a part of the Quintet, which is Nezami's posthumous collection of five poems. It is often given as the final component, though it is the Seven Portraits, *Haft Peykar*, that was written last (see p.78). Originally the Alexander Romance poem was dedicated to the Sharvanshah of Ganja²⁵⁹, but as he died before Nezami had completed his work, it was ultimately dedicated to Nosrat al-Din Bishkin, whose name appears in the epilogue of *Eqbalnama*. The *Sharafnama* poem, written in *motaqareb* metre, enhances different episodes of Alexander's life: his enthronement in Macedonia, the war against the Zangian (see p.82), his victorious war against the Persians and the subsequent death of Dara (the historical Darius III), his wedding with Rowshanak, his pilgrimage to Mecca, his visit to Queen Nushaba of Barda', his travels to India and China, the war against the Russians and his unsuccessful search for the water of immortality. In the *Eqbalnama*, Alexander is depicted as a prophet and his search of knowledge leads to a number of discussions with Greek and Hindu philosophers. Later on, Alexander travels around the world to convert different nations to monotheism. Nezami goes on to explain why Alexander is called Dhu-l Qarnayn²⁶⁰ and after many other fabulous adventures, Alexander returns to Rum where he writes his will and dies. In truth, the *Eqbalnama* narrative evolves between the concepts of an idealized past and the uncertainties of life²⁶¹. The *Eskandarnama* set a pattern for later reinterpretations by other authors, such as Amir Khosrow (d.1328), Jami (d.1492) as well as Ottoman version by Ahmadi (d.1413).

As is the case with many masterpieces of Persian poetry, a large number of illustrated *Eskandarnama* manuscripts exist. The manuscript from which this illuminated frontispiece has been detached was indeed a luxurious one. The *nasta'liq* script text placed within clouds reserved against a gold ground with tiny flowers is typical of Shiraz book workshops of the sixteenth century.

The outer margins incorporate dentate shapes filled with vine scrolls, quatrefoils and teardrops motifs in lapis, white, gold and red with blue darts extending into the margins. The book title on top of the right page is written in white *thuluth* script inside a gold lobed medallion with pendants enclosed in a rectangle, *sarlowh*, decorated with polychrome flowers and arabesques.

The arrangement of this frontispiece displays features typical of a Safavid atelier, made on demand for a local nobleman, rather than that of a royal commission.

Accession N° 1801. Folios 1b-2a

Bifolium, 19 lines written in black *nasta'liq* script arranged in four columns within clouds reserved against a gold ground. Illuminated double-page frontispiece with title written in white *thuluth* script inside a gold lobed medallion, enclosed in a rectangular panel. Margins decorated with dentate shapes, *shorfeh*, in gold and polychrome. Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper. 34,5 x 28,5 cm. Shiraz, Safavid period, circa 1570







◀ KHOSROW AND SHIRIN OF HATEFI

‘Abdollah Hatefi²⁶² was from the town of Khargerd, where he was born and lived most of his life. He was the nephew of the famous poet Jami (d.1492). Contemporary biographical compendiums refer to Hatefi as a poet and the custodian of the tomb at Khargerd of fellow poet Qasem al-Anvari (d.1433). He was accepted into the literary circles of Herat after passing an examination, set by his uncle Jami, which required him to compose a poetic response to some verses of Balki (see p.89).

His poetry is characterized by its originality in the handling of the narrative. Of the five poems or Quintet that were originally intended, ultimately only four were completed.

They are as follows: *Layli va Majnun*, *Khosrow va Shirin*, dedicated to vizier Navai and inspired by the homonym works of Nezami, *Seven Belvederes*, *Haft Manzar*, dedicated to Timurid prince Shah Gharib, the Book of Timur, *Timurnama* or *Zafarnama-ye Manzum*, and the unfinished Imperial Victories, *Fotuhāt-i Shahi*²⁶³, which is a panegyric poem commissioned by Shah Esmā’il who met Hatefi, a fellow Shi’ite too, at Khargerd in 1511.

Unfortunately Hatefi passes away in 1521 before completing the *Fotuhāt-i Shahi*, of which only roughly one thousand verses remain in a few manuscripts. One example, dated 1551, can be found in the Oriental Institute of Saint Petersburg. The Khosrow and Shirin romance²⁶⁴ follows the Nezami narrative scheme inspired by the life of Sassanian king Khosrow II Parviz, but is written in Hatefi’s characteristic relaxed manner. This poet became famous even beyond the frontiers of Iran and his works were translated into different languages, including an ottoman version by Lamiî Chelebi.

It would appear, according to Cristoforo Armeno’s *Pregrinaggio*, that *Haft Manzar* was already widely known in Europe from the sixteenth century onwards. This rare and interesting manuscript, copied in Herat by the famous calligrapher Mir ‘Ali al-Hosayni perpetuates the meticulous nature of the Timurid book style. In comparison, the one distinctive element on the opening double-page composition is the headgear or *taj-i haydari* worn by both male figures. As previously mentioned, the use of this turban was established during early Safavid sovereignty²⁶⁵.

The charming gesture of the princely couple, seated in a landscape, alludes to Khosrow and Shirin, the royal central characters of the poem. This previously unveiled manuscript is one of the rare works made in Herat during the early reign of Shah Esmā’il, when the renowned painter Behzad was still active there.

The fashion of opening with a double-page painting was introduced by Timurid artists from Shiraz and subsequently adopted with enthusiasm by Safavid painters.

Accession N° 584. Folios 1b-2a

Manuscript, 68 leaves, 15 lines per page written in black

fine *nasta’liq* script, arranged in two columns with polychrome rules.

Double-page frontispiece with paintings, headpiece, *sarlowh*,

in opening folio with a *kufic* inscription “*God is abiding*”, inside a gold

medallion. Colophon page (f 68a) mentions “*written by ‘Ali al-Hosayni al-Kateb at the end of Moharram month in the year 922 of Hegira (March of 1516)*”.

Brown leather binding embossed with a central medallion.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

22 x 13,5 cm

Herat, Safavid period, 1516

► DIVAN OF SHAHI

The *ghazals* in this *Divan* are arranged alphabetically according to the rhymes, with the addition of some quatrains, *roba'iyat*, and poetic fragments, *moqatta'at*.

The aesthetics of this manuscript was shared by book workshops in both Herat and Shiraz during the second half of the sixteenth century. It is sometimes difficult to establish the provenance between the ateliers of the two cities, but the use of black pigments in the frontispiece illumination and the firmness of the penmanship are consistent with Khorasan artists' practices.

Copies of Shahi's *Divan* were much in demand by connoisseurs²⁶⁶ and the present manuscript is a paramount remnant of that infatuation. Shahi was a painter, musician and poet who entered the Timurid court of Soltan Hosayn Bayqara (d.1505) and took the penname of "Shahi". According to the historian Qazi Nurollah Shushtari he chose this pseudonym after the epithet in praise of Imam 'Ali "shah-i velaiyat".

His name is given as Amir Malak b. Jamal al-Din Firuzkuhi Sabzavari by different sources²⁶⁷. Shahi descended from a noble family of emirs of Sarbadaran, and his father was a prominent official at Herat. Shahi maintained a close relationship with Soltan Hosayn Bayqara, who wished to adopt the same literary pseudonym, but the poet managed to make him change his mind. Bayqara's own poems, reunited in a *Divan*, were written under his penname of "Hosayni", though most scholars consider his work to be of little value. Alongside the *Divan*, compiled circa 1450, other numerous collected works or *Kolliyat* by Shahi still exist.

Most of his poems are remarkably expressive and often speak of the wounds of love afflicting the soul. Shahi had a great influence on his contemporaries due as much to his humanity as to his poetry. His great popularity continued well after his death. Even the Ottoman Sultan Selim I (d.1520) attempted to imitate Shahi's style in his own poems.

Unfortunately, personal discrepancies emerged between Shahi and Soltan Hosayn Bayqara. Shahi would thus leave Herat for Sabzavar, his hometown, where he remained until his death in 1453. The splendid illuminated headpiece is a characteristic compositional template from the period. The lobed cartouche inside a rectangle is ornamented with interlacing patterns, half quatrefoils and floral motifs in polychrome and gold, positioned under a crest filled with colored arabesques.

Accession N° 237. Folio 1a

Manuscript, 48 leaves, 10 lines per page written in black *nasta'liq* script arranged in two columns with polychrome rules.

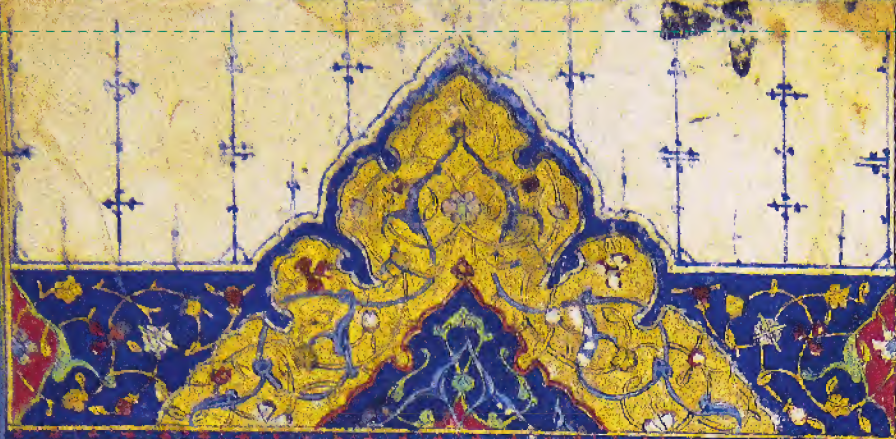
Frontispiece, with ornamented headpiece, *sarlowh*, in gold and polychrome; golden cusped cartouches marks poem divisions.

Plain brown leather binding.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

19,5 x 12 cm

Khorasan, Safavid period, 16th century



دین شد ز وزیران سرپوش
خود عقل خند پند از کار و کشت
رشتک آید ز کعبه چو بهشت
لطف تو خود نمی کرد خوب و رشت
بوی و قار طینت بر سر رشت

ای نفس نه نام خط با پرشت
کارم سپینه خم و فای کوشش
ای شیخ شهر اگر بخرابات بکزی
ما شرمسار مانم ز تقصیر باغش
بگذر پسوی تربت شایسته شبنوی

چند بدل منور و خورم ناله جان
رفته بدامن من چیده که نیاز را

اشک جو پرده می به خلتیان
میر سحری کون دل آب نم ره ترا

► HOLY QURAN

The Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Mecca and Medina over a period of twenty-three years, and became the primary religious source for Muslims. Copies of the Quran were made, as is the case with this one, in one single volume, *muṣḥaf*, or in several volumes, *rab'ah*²⁶⁸, usually thirty but we also find two, seven and sixty volumes copies.

It is well known that manuscripts are considered to be the hallmarks of Islamic civilization and Qurans are, in this regard, considered the greatest of achievements. Early canonical texts connected with the making and handling of Quran codices²⁶⁹ are extremely restrictive regarding the use of embellishment or decoration of the Muslims' holy book.

These recommendations would later be ignored by powerful rulers in search of religious and political prestige who openly advocated the illumination of the Quran. Well beyond the spiritual meaning of Quran and the ritual purity attached to its making, Muslim monarchs had a particular interest in endowing mosques and religious schools with Qurans as a form of pious commitment. The magnificent Quran shown here embraces the Persian regal style that was particularly prized by members of nobility, providing us with an insight into the Safavids' taste for luxury. The superb opening double-page has a central rosette or *shamsa* pattern (f 1b-2a), each one containing three lines of white *thulth* in the center of a gold circle set in a gold and blue star of eight points. Each point is in the shape of a trefoil filled with lace, vine and tiny flowers decorated with blue and red arabesque pendants extending from each point of the star. In the *shamsas* the inscription begins with the words "*Allah, blessed and exalted is He*" followed by Sura XVII, 88 "*Say, if mankind and the jinn collaborate to produce the likes of this Quran, they will not produce anything alike, even if they assist one another*".

The visual impact of these ornamental rosettes illustrates some of the myriad ways that Muslims artists enhance Quran spiritual content synecdochically. The doorways and façades of Persian religious buildings with their glazed tiles or mosaic decoration are directly related to some aspect of manuscript illumination. This is a clear result of the interaction between different artist guilds.



The second double-page frontispiece (f 2b-3a) contains the Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Quran, written in white *reyhan* script enclosed in a gold lobed central medallion, *toranj*, with sky-blue crenellations and pendants, *sar-toranj*, on a lapis background with golden corner-pieces, *konj*. The background contains gold cloud-bands called *chi*, and minute spiraling flowers. The pattern of a central lobed elliptical medallion, with pendants and corner-pieces, that together form a metaphorical representation of the celestial sky, appears to have been passed down from bookbinding craft²⁷⁰. The margins at three sides of the double-page frontispiece incorporate dentate trefoils shapes, *shorfeh*, ornate with minute flowers and quatrefoils in gold and polychrome. The cloud-band is a recurrent motif employed by the artist to embellish the background of the double-page frontispiece.

This, as well as the illuminated headpiece of Sura II, is the only chapter decorated in this manner. All other Sura title headings, *fawatih*, are written in a lobed cartouche enclosed in a rectangle with polychrome and gold. Another particularity of this Quran is the illuminated headpiece (f 215a) at the end of the Quran text, immediately after the last chapter, Sura CXIV, with an inscription in a cartouche that reads “On divination by means of Allah’s glorious words”. This announces the beginning, which is actually missing here, of a *Fal-i Quran*²⁷¹ or Divination by Quran. Although divination by the Quran appears largely in the Safavid context, it also happens sporadically in Deccan and more rarely in Ottoman realm. *Fal-i Quran* usually contains Persian poetry with a series of distiches keyed to each letter of the alphabet. This allows for the practice of divination by randomly selecting a letter when opening to a page of the Quran. This practice has been seen as a Shi’ite phenomenon due to the fact that there exists a large spectrum of divination techniques employed by Shi’ites in Iran. Among them there is *Fal-i Hafez*, which is the random consulting of verses in the Divan of Hafiz, as well as *Falnama*²⁷² or bibliomancy. Under the remaining original headpiece rectangle on this last page is now pasted an Ottoman endowment statement *waqf*. It is written in elegant large *thuluth* script, partially cut on the left side, which reads “This endowment was made on 8 Ramadan 1131 Hegira (27 July 1719)”. Copies of Safavid Qurans were used as bartering items in the trade that took place between Ottomans and Persians, in spite of the hostility of their relationship during much of the sixteenth century. Those Safavid Qurans, like the present one, were particularly prized by the Ottomans²⁷³, as is demonstrated by their inclusion as diplomatic gifts by Safavid envoys to the Istanbul court. One illustration in the first volume of *Shahanshahnama-i Murad-i Salis* (dated 1581) depicts the Safavid ambassador, Toqmaq Khan at the Ottoman court with presents for the sultan that include Quran manuscripts²⁷⁴. In comparison, several mid-sixteenth century Qurans share similar pattern decoration with the present one, particularly the double-page frontispiece at the Sackler Art Gallery in Washington²⁷⁵ and three single volume Qurans kept at the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart²⁷⁶, Munich Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek²⁷⁷ and Mkhitarist Congregation²⁷⁸, Venice, all of them with *Fal-i Quran* at the end of the manuscript.

Accession N° 1623. Folios 2a, 2b-3a

Manuscript, 251 leaves, 14 lines per page in vocalized black *naskh* script with polychrome rules. Gold roundels separating verses, five and ten verses marked in margins with polychrome roundels. Sura titles inside cartouches written in white *thuluth* script enclosed in ornamented rectangles. Two luxuriously decorated double-page frontispieces, the first with inscriptions in a rosette, *shamsa*, and the second with the opening text inside a lobed central medallion fully illuminated.

Final page with a polychrome and gold headpiece, *sarlowh*, pasted with an ottoman endowment text. Brown leather binding embossed with a central medallion.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

33 x 22 cm

Western Iran, Safavid period, circa 1560





سورة الاحقاف
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين انا انزلناه
وحي نوح

QURAN FRAGMENT

Safavid rulers and individuals as diverse as government officials, religious figures and courtiers displayed their pious commitment by the endowment of Quran manuscripts to mosques and shi'a holy shrines. This unbound Quran fragment contains Sura XXIII, XXXII, XXXVIII, XLII, XLIII, XLIV, LVIII, LIX, LX, LXI, LXII, LXIII, LXIV, LXV, LXVI and LXVIII.

Stylistically it belongs to a large group of Qurans produced in Iran from the early sixteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century. The pages of those Qurans usually have three lines in large script combined with further text in a smaller script, set within clouds reserved against a gold ground. This last ornamentation is a convention that was established early on – from the fourteenth century – in Ilkhanid and Mamluk Qurans.

The page illustrated here contains Sura XLII, 52-53: XLIII, 1-8, with a beautifully written *besmellah* on the seventh line. This formula of *besmellah*, also called *tasmiya*, has been observed since the first century of Hegira, and is pronounced by Muslims before nearly all activity in daily life.

Its full rendering in the Quran is "*Besmellah al-Rahman al-Rahim*" or "In the name of Allah the Compassionate and the Merciful" placed at the beginning of all chapters except Sura IX. This formula occurs only once inside the Quran's text in an abbreviated form in Sura XI, 41 and once in its full form in Sura XXVII, 30.

Some scholars such as Gignoux and Kalus, have concluded that the *besmellah* may have been adapted from the Mazdean formula "*Pad nam-i yazdan*" or "In the name of gods", which can be found on different Sassanian monuments as those at Paikuli and Meshkinshahr. Muslim authorities believe that the Prophet Muhammad did not consider the revelation of any Sura complete until he was commanded to place this formula at its beginning. The rendering of the *besmellah* implies a singular penmanship²⁹ from a calligrapher because of the allomorphic affinity seen to exist between this formula and the esoteric speculation of a hidden cosmological entity behind it. According to Al-Nawawi a group Suras (IXL-CXIV) at the end of the Quran is called Al-Mufaṣṣal, because the frequency of the *besmellah* formula is amplified by the brevity of those Suras²⁸⁰.

Accession N° 1766. Folio 12a

30 folios, 13 lines per page, first, seventh and thirteenth lines written in vocalized black large *muhaqqaq* script, within clouds reserved against a gold ground with polychrome rules. The other ten lines of text written in vocalized black small *naskh* script with coil flowery ornaments at sides. Sura titles inside ornate rectangles written in white *thuluth* script. Individual verses marked with gold roundels. Prayers and the five or ten verses division set in marginal lobed medallions. Brown leather binding with the inscription "Ahmad Shaybi b. Shaykh 'Ali Qaratashi in the year 1252 Hegira (1837)".

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

29,5 x 19 cm

Shiraz, Safavid period, late 16th century

وَحَامِلِ مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا

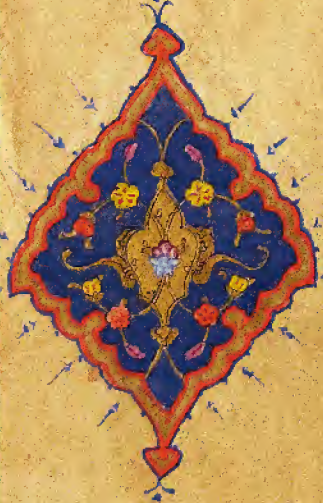
الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ وَلَكِنْ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُورًا نَهْدِي بِهِ
مَنْ نَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا وَأَنْتَ لَهْدَى إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ صِرَاطِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ أَلَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَصِيرُ الْأُمُورُ

سُورَةُ الزَّخْرَفِ رَجْعٌ وَمَسَاقِلُهُ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

حَمْدٌ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ وَإِنَّمَا الْكِتَابُ لَدَيْنَا
لَعَلَّ نَحْكُمَ بِغَضَبٍ مِنْكَ لَكَ صَفْحًا
أَنْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُسْرِقِينَ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ
فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ إِلَّا كُنُوزٌ يَنْهَوْنَ

فَاهْلِكُنَا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَمِثْلُ



THE BOOK OF KINGS BY FERDOWSI

Abu-l Qasem Manusr b. al-Hasan al-Ferdowsi al-Tusi (d.1020), spent more than thirty five years composing the *Shahnama* or Book of Kings²⁸¹, the most celebrated work in Persian literature. It is not known why the poet chose the pen name Ferdowsi, which is mentioned only three times in the text. This epic poem, written in *motaqareb* metre, recounts the history, legends and myths of Persian imperial dynasties. Ferdowsi limited his expression somewhat by deliberately choosing Persian vocabulary over Arabic. It is likely that Ferdowsi included the chronicle of Iranian kings, an earlier work of Abu Mansur Daqiqi (d.980) comprising a thousand *bayts*, in his own poem.

Both of those authors make use of another prose version of *Shahnama*, which was written in 957 by Abu Mansur b. 'Abd al-Razzak, which was primarily a Persian translation of Pahlavi *Khvaday-namag*. Ferdowsi was able to complete the first version of the *Shahnama* by 994, three years before Soltan Mahmud of Ghazni (d.1030) succeeded to the throne. On several occasions Ferdowsi asked influential Ghazni court dignitaries to intercede on his behalf to seek help from Soltan Mahmud but this was never successful. This perhaps explains why the poet added both a satirical passage on Soltan Mahmud as well as a preface honoring his friend Mansur b. Abu Mansur Muhammad. He finally presented the *Shahnama* to Soltan Mahmud's court in 1010²⁸². As the work was not favorably received by the king, it was severely criticized and rejected by Ghazni court poets. This demonstrated the court poets' loyalty to their Sunni patron, since, according to Nezami Aruzi, Ferdowsi was not a Sunnite but a Shi'ite. In addition to the cold reception received by the poem, the payment from the king was so low that Ferdowsi was extremely upset and left to take refuge in Tabarestan.

By the time that Soltan Mahmud, regretting his behavior toward the poet, sent him a larger recompense, Ferdowsi was being buried outside of the city of Tus. Since that time, the *Shahnama* remains unchallenged and unchanged, with the exception of two modifications to the preface. Mostofi Qazvini made the first modification in 1334. The second one was done by Timurid prince Baysonqor in 1426, who replaced the "Mansuri" preface with his own, which then became the standard in nearly every existing manuscript. This luxurious manuscript opens with the "Baysonqori" preface (f 2b-7b), followed by the satire on Soltan Mahmud with an odd incipit (f 4b-5a) and finally the standard incipit (f 7b). Like other truncated *Shahnama*, this manuscript has several inclusions, most particularly the *Barzu Nama*²⁸³, inserted after the Bijan and Manijastory and illustrated with four miniatures (f 153b, 154b, 157b, 167a)²⁸⁴. The other fifty miniatures illustrate episodes from *Shahnama*. The painting schema in this Book of Kings follows the customary representations with Rostam, Esfandiyar and Siyavosh heroes' cycle, as well as manifold enthronements, battles and individual combats. The figures, the livestock and the landscapes are all stylized; to a great extent with Qajar repertoire, and the most distinctive visual element is the large scale of some of the paintings.

Accession N° 535. Folios 206b, 123b, 125b, 48a

Manuscript, 390 leaves, 27 lines per page written
in black regular *naskh* script arranged in four columns
and diagonally in the margins with polychrome rules.

Three illuminated double-page frontispieces in polychrome and gold.

Fifty four paintings, colophon page (f 385a) mentions "*copy finished
on Wednesday 3 Dhu- al-Hijja of the year 1245 Hegira (26 Mai 1830)
by the humble and poor Muhammad Hosayn b. 'Ali Muhammad,
who made it for his excellence Muhammad Karim Khan Bidashahri*".

Laquer pasteboard binding painted with battle scenes.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

35 x 23,5 cm

Tehran, Qajar period, 1845



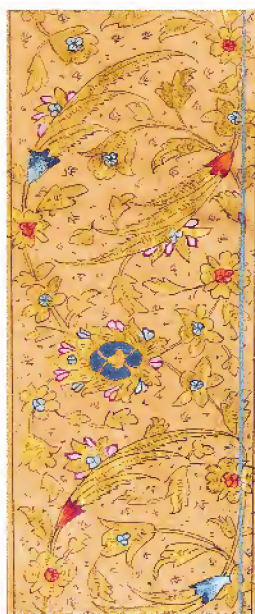
جان بدو کجا رفت و پادشاه

خست
 شاه و پادشاهان
 بهر سودی که باشد
 بر بلند جبهه ی لشکران
 عین آن بر یک جام می خست
 دل شاه و پادشاهان
 چه گشت اسیر و چه در پستان
 چنین گشت کلین و داد و ست
 لبها ی خست و خندان
 همان نام شاه و پادشاهان
 از زدن گلاوه و

This image shows a vertical strip of a manuscript page, likely from a Persian or Islamic book, featuring a repeating floral and foliate pattern. The design is composed of stylized yellow flowers with red centers, blue and red blossoms, and green leaves. The pattern is set against a light background and is framed by a red border on the left and a yellow border on the right. The overall style is characteristic of traditional Islamic art, with intricate details and a vibrant color palette.

◀ *Frontispiece*

This superb frontispiece leaf marks the middle of the manuscript and refers to the enthronement of King Lohrasp. The king ascends to the throne saying a prayer and praising God. Soon after, Lohrasp sends envoys to all neighboring countries and builds a grandiose fire temple in Balkh. The Zoroastrian religion flourished in Iran during his reign. One of the most distinctive compositional elements in this frontispiece is the intricate minutia of flowers covering the ground of superposed crest trefoils shapes on top of the headpiece, itself decorated with lobed medallions and golden cartouches. The crest trefoils shapes are enclosed on three sides by strips with alternate cartouches and medallions. All these patterns are enhanced by a wealth of colors in matching shades of blue, red and pink. Margins at four sides are filled with a subtle golden and polychrome coiled foliage garland, similar to those found, two decades later, in the margins of Naser al-Din Shah imperial decrees.



► The Div Akvan lifts Rostam sleeping

The royal horses of King Kay Khosrow are being harassed by a malicious demon, *div*. The king then decides to send the paladin, *pahlavan-e jahan*, Rostam to secure the situation. For three days Rostam searches the surrounding forest hoping to confront the *div*. He becomes so tired that he falls asleep in a meadow. The *div*, named Akvan, approaches and in one strike lifts the piece of ground on which Rostam is sleeping. Raising the boulder high in the sky, the exulting *div* asks Rostam how he would like to die tossed into the sea or dashed against the mountain rocks. Knowing that Akvan was a shrewd demon, Rostam understood that he would do the opposite of whatever choice he made. So Rostam chooses the second proposition and survives being flung into the sea in spite of the menacing monsters swimming in the water around him. In this painting the terrifying *div* –unusually is shown face on–with its muscular hairy body, is offset by Rostam’s calm expression. The ocean dangers explicit in the text are visually absent here, only nervous Rakhsh, Rostam’s stallion, at the right of the painting, seems to be aware of them. The painter emphasizes the realism of this scene by magnifying the shape of two individuals. An edition of the *Shahnama*, printed at Tabriz in 1858 with etchings by Ostad Satter, shows a matching page of this same episode²⁸⁵.



چو رستم جیبید بر خوسرو
 سوجی آیت اندازم از سوجی کوه
 کجا خواهی افتاد دور از کوه
 چو رستم نکند ادا و نیکوید
 سحران در کف دیو و اژدها
 قی و اسحق اتم نباید بکار
 در دماغه زهر
 در دماغه زهر



مبدار یا بر آید گرد اندازد م
 چنین داد یا سحر که دانا چن
 بگویم بیدار تا بیرون شهر
 یکی داستان ز دوست اند
 که در آب هر کوه بر آیدش هوش
 و رستم چو نشیند آوان دیو
 کفن سینه ماهیان سازدم
 بمنین نه بیند رو افش سروش
 بر آورد در سوجی و در باغ خرو

کجا خواهی افتاد دور از کوه
 چو رستم نکند ادا و نیکوید
 سحران در کف دیو و اژدها
 قی و اسحق اتم نباید بکار
 در دماغه زهر
 در دماغه زهر

► *The battle against boars*

The people of Armanian—these are not Armenians but those who live in Arman or the Ideal country—come to ask King Kay Khosrow to help them protect their farmlands which are being relentlessly damaged by wild boars, *guraz*. The king is touched by their request and asks who amongst his braves is ready to wage war against the beasts, offering a reward of ten stallions with golden harnesses to any volunteer. Bijan and his companion Gurgin accept the task. Once the two heroes arrive at the forest they follow the boars' scent until they finally confront them. The Persian warriors end up killing all the wild beasts in view. In this painting, Bijan on horseback slays a ferocious boar, while Gurgin watches the pack of scent hounds chasing the scampering wild boars. The scene mingles energetic action with naturalism and places the viewer very closer to the action. This episode is clearly related to the ancient royal tradition of boar hunting, seen earlier on in the finely carved dishes of gold and silver from the Sassanian period.





◀ Fire ordeal of Siyavosh

Sudaba, one of King Kay Kavus's wives, has become infatuated with Siyavosh, the king's son, who rejects his mother-in-law's advances. Sudaba falsely accuses Siyavosh of trying to rape her. Siyavosh is left pleading for an opportunity to prove his innocence, and he asks to undergo a fire ordeal, *bar-atesh*. Although thoroughly vindicated and cleared of any blame, Siyavosh eventually departs for Turan. The painting captures this dramatic situation. King Kay Kavus is seated under the imperial umbrella, *sayaban*, observing to his dismay, his son Siyavosh, galloping through a blazing furnace. Witnesses on the painting's left side are watching Sudaba, who is on a balcony on the other side. This scene of royal integrity is rendered livelier by a colorful palette. The painter's brush lingers on Siyavosh who, golden-crowned, dressed in white and riding a black steed, has plunged into the flames and smoke.



◀ Rostam fight with the White demon

After King Kay Kavus and his entourage were captured and blinded by demons, *divs*, in Mazandaran, Zal sends Rostam to the rescue. Rostam encounters several trials on his way, labeled as the Seven labours, *Haft khavan*. This page illustrates the final trial, oddly enough is not referred as the Seventh labour in most of the authoritative manuscripts of *Shahnama*. While on the way to Mazandaran Rostam captures Ovlad, a local nobleman (the Sixth labour), and forces him to act as his guide. Ovlad advises Rostam to wait until noon when demons guarding the cave will be sleeping. Rostam ties Ovlad to a tree before penetrating into a dark cave, where he attacks the sleeping White *div*. During the ensuing fight Rostam slices off the demon's limbs and cuts out his liver, because only the blood of the White demon can restore everyone's sight. The cave is shown in section and Rostam, who is not wearing his emblematic tiger-skin coat, *babr-e bayan*²⁸⁶, is ready to slay the powerless demon. Outside the cave Ovlad, wearing a crown, looks worried while the other *divs* seems to be afraid and the Iranian soldiers are astounded by Rostam's bravery. The idyllic landscape rendered with soft colored rocks, vernal flowers and trees, is in deliberate contrast to the pounding fight inside the cave.



DIVAN OF HAFIZ

Khawaja Shams al-Din Muhammad Shirazi (d.1392), better known as Hafiz, is the greatest poet of the lyrical Persian tradition. His standing is so great that Persian-speakers often memorize his poems. They are considered to be the tongue of the unseen and used for prognostications named *Fal-i Hafiza*. The Inju sovereign Abu 'Eshaq (d.1353) built a special madrasa for Hafiz to carry out his religious teachings. He was a popular figure at the Shiraz court under both Inju and Muzaffarid rule, although at one point there was a latent rivalry with contemporary poet 'Emad Faqih (d.1372) which resulted in Hafiz's living briefly in Yazd and Isfahan. Hafiz would ultimately return to his hometown Shiraz, where he received a warm welcome from Shah Shuja (d.1384). His innumerable *ghazals* are about the possible meaninglessness of life, the holy and human love, with bold language and memorable images, which tie him to specific events and well-known rulers.

There was a surge of copies of his *Divan* made after his death in 1390, but without the certitude that all of the *ghazals* are genuine. The Timurid ruler Soltan Hosayn Bayqara produced a revision of Hafiz's *Divan*, after hundreds of early copies were collected and collated to materialize this new edition. The resulting compilation was given the title of *Lesan al-Ghayb* or the Language of the Unseen. Sadly, this recension²⁸⁷ was later neglected and then replaced by Muhammad Golandam's new compilation of Hafiz's selected *ghazals*, with a preface found in many manuscripts of the *Divan* from the beginning of the fifteenth century onwards.

This manuscript contains only the *ghazals* arranged in the alphabetical ordering of rhymes but without Golandam's preface, written in a tasteful *nasta'liq* script. The frontispiece in the manuscript shows a curved-arch shape, *sarlowh*, on azur ground enclosing polychrome coiled boughs, a gold central lobed medallion and two lateral red cloud-bands, *chi*, framed by strips of gold strapwork. All the stylistic trends point towards a provincial book workshop manufacture, perhaps from the Gilan. A later handwritten Russian inscription in the upper left side reads "this is the beginning of the manuscript".

Accession N° 573. Folio 1b

Manuscript, 146 leaves, 12-13 lines per page written in black graceful *nasta'liq* arranged in two columns with polychrome rules. Frontispiece with an ornamented headpiece in gold and polychrome. A former owner seal imprint (f 2a and 145a) reads "'Abdih Bakhshayr in the year 1236 Hegira (1821)". Burgundy leather binding with embossed motifs. Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper. 21,5 x 14,5 cm
Gilan, Safavid period, 17th century

Imo z'meo
nardao
pykonu



ایلا ایلا الساقی ادر کا ساؤ ماو لھا
بیونی فو کا خر سباراں طرہ
مرا و منزل اچانا چ اسن عیش چن
بشت مار یک پیم موج کر با چن نل
ی بجاؤ یکین کن ت پیر معان کن
مہ کارم ز خود کا فی بید نامی شید
حضوری کر چھی اسی زو غیاب حافظ

کہ غسوسان بول لی اثنا کلھا
ز تاب جھٹکین تن تاب افتاد و ر لھا
چرس نسیر یو میدارو کہ پر نیدید
کجا و اند حال با یک با لھا
کہ ساکت بھر نو بوزرا و پر سہ سہ
نہان کی ماڈاں ازی کر و سازد لھا
متی ملق من تھوی ع الیہ بناوا لھا

ای فروع چیں ماہ از روی شان

آب روی خوبی از باغ رخساران

CALLIGRAPHY EXERCISE

The daily practice of calligraphers, *khattat*, included handicraft exercises to maintain their penmanship. One of the exercises is *siyamashq* whereby calligraphers write overlapping rows of words and letters as demonstrated here. Besides attesting to a calligrapher's skill, the masters' exercise sheets were assembled in albums to serve as models of virtuosity to be copied out by pupils as practice.

The King Muhammad Shah (d.1848) took special interest in the work of Mirza Gholam Reza Esfahani (d.1887) and assigned him to train the Qajar princes. The privileged position held by Gholam Reza radically changed under the next ruler, Naser al-Din Shah (d.1896). Gholam Reza fell out of favor specifically when he was wrongly accused of Babism²⁸⁸ and forgery. Notwithstanding these personal setbacks, Gholam Reza's calligraphic work is considered outstanding and he was particularly admired by his students Mirza 'Amu and Ebrahim Tehrani, who signed their works with the same shi'ite invocation formula as their master: "Ya 'Ali madad" or "call up on Imam 'Ali aid".

There is no doubt that this calligraphy exercise bears Reza's signature in the middle right side and the invocation formula on the left side. He produced numerous works and among the best are a copy of *Tohfāt al-Vozara* dated 1848 (see p.92), a copy of Sa'di's *Golestan*, circa 1850, several album pages and single sheets of calligraphy²⁸⁹. He also executed beautiful monumental inscriptions such as the epigraphic friezes in Tehran Madrasa-ye Sepahsalar and Almassiyeh buildings, both in 1883. It is worth mentioning that this finely executed *siyamashq* dates from the peak of Gholam Reza's power at the end of his life. Among other public collections the Central Library of Tehran University, the Bibliothèque Nationale of France and the Golestan Palace Library hold valuable works of this artist.

Accession N° 35.

Album page, *qita'*, calligraphy exercise in black large *nasta'liq* script on a veined ground within clouds reserved against a gold ground.

Signed by Gholam Reza and dated 1300 Hegira.

Inner border of meandering floral vine with polychrome rules, within grey margins.

Ink and opaque pigments on paper.

25 x 18 cm

Tehran, Qajar period, 1883



QUINTET OF NEZAMI

The narrative poems by Nezami are considered to be the masterpieces of Persian literature. After Nezami's death in 1209, manuscripts with his five *masnavi* poems called *Khamasa*, Quintet or *Panj Ganj*, Five treasures, began to appear. A vast number of *Khamasa* copies exist, dating from the fourteenth century to the late nineteenth century and they are frequently illustrated²⁹⁰. Nizami's Quintet contains the *Makhzan al-Esrar*, Treasure of Mysteries, comprising roughly 2260 distiches in *sari* metre, completed in 1166 or 1176; *Khosrow va Shirin*, with roughly 6500 distiches in *hazaj* metre, completed in 1186; *Leyli va Majnun* with some 4600 distiches in *hazaj* metre, completed in 1188; *Haft Peykar*, Seven Portraits, with roughly 5150 distiches in *khafif* metre completed in 1197 and *Eskandarnama*, in all some 10500 distiches in *motaqareb* metre completed near 1194 (see p.49).

By comparing existent manuscripts of *Khamasa*, scholars, principally De Blois, established that *Haft Paykar* was the last composed poem, though in the majority of *Khamasa* manuscripts it is placed before the *Eskandarnama*. Nezami drew inspiration from earlier works by Ferdowsi (d.1020), Nezam al-Molk (d.1092) and Sanai (d.1131)

In turn, Nezami clearly influenced the development of Persian literature. This is seen in the imitative works of other poets such as Amir Khosrow (d.1328), Khawaju Kirmani (d.1349), Jami (d.1492) and Hatefi (d.1520) who continue the tradition of composing poems assembled in Quintets.

Together with the *Shahnama*, Nezami's *Khamasa* is the most frequently illustrated manuscript in Persia, Hindustan and Central Asia. The present manuscript with its many paintings reflects a commissioned work by a high-ranking Safavid dignitary. The style of the illustrations seems to follow that of the famous painter Mo'in Mosavver²⁹¹, with some similar features, such as same kind of compositions or the presence of birds, a recurrent decorative motif in most of the scenes. These paintings depict idealized figures and themes related to the different episodes of the book. They are executed with saturated colors and half shade tones, providing a reliance on the seventeenth century Isfahan school style. Another copy of Nezami's *Khamasa* illustrated by Taleb Lala between 1665 and 1667²⁹² shares close features with this manuscript.

Accession N° 548. Folios 189a, 222a, 263a

Manuscript, 316 leaves, 25 lines per page written in black and red steady *nasta'liq* arranged in four columns with polychrome rules. Five poem titles headpieces, *sarlowh*, (f 2a, 23b, 97b, 150b, 208b), ornamented in gold and polychrome. Thirty seven paintings. Colophon page (316a) mentions: "copy finished on 20 Dhu al-Hijja 1087 Hegira (23 February 1677) by Ibn Karim al-Din Haydar Madah Shirazi". A librarian notice, 'arz' (f 1a) mentions: "Aqa Kafuri general controller of the State Treasury attests this copy was remitted to Royal Library on 9 Ramadan 1090 Hegira (14 October 1679)". Crimson leather binding. Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper. 37,5x21,5 cm Isfahan, Safavid period, 1677

► Bahram Gur visits the blue dome pavilion

This illustration belongs to an episode of *Haft Paykar* or Seven Portraits, the romanticized history and adventurous life of King Bahram Gur (the historical Sassanian King Bahram V).

The most notorious of the tales is the one about the king's search for seven princesses in order to win them as brides, after which he orders the construction of seven pavilions with domes, each one a different color. When the princesses take up residence in the pavilions, Bahram Gur visits one each day to listen to a story that matches both the mood of color and the planet attached to that particular day. In this illustration we see the *kabud* or blue dome pavilion on Wednesday with Azaryune, a princess from Maghreb, who regales the king with the history of the unfortunate Mahan from Cairo, who becomes inebriated and finds himself in evil company. The scene here takes the form of an indoor feast, with attendants and musicians joyfully entertaining the princess and the king. The elongated silhouettes are dressed in conventional Safavid court style. This charming gathering seems to challenge the tragic tale that the princess will narrate soon thereafter. A detached leaf painted by Mo'in Mosavver with a very similar scene is housed in the Free Library of Philadelphia (P106).





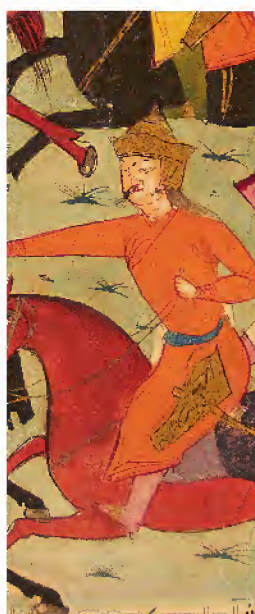
دگر تاشبازان امداران نیک

جهاندار با فتح و سار



◀ Alexander fights the Zangian

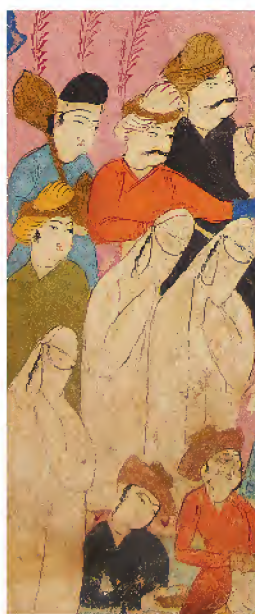
This painting is related to an episode from *Eskandernama*, when the afflicted people of Egypt come to ask Alexander to deliver them from the tyranny of the invader king of Zang. Nezami describes the Zangian, actually Ethiopians, as black skinned people and man-eaters, because they devour the enemies that they slay. After long epistolary exchanges between the two monarchs, war became inevitable. The painter of this illustration, a different one from the other pages of this *Khamasa*, chose to render the combat as frightening as suggested by the verses “*a rust-colored cloud appeared, it poured down a river of blood, in that torrent that passed from foot to head*”. While Alexander’s archer shoot and a soldier use his blades to slay an enemy, blowing trumpeters *nafirjians* on the horizon are announcing a victorious day. Silhouettes are summarily drawn in an energetic composition against a mild landscape, without the typical dark skinned rendering of Zangian and reflecting a conformist interpretation of warfare.



◀ *The Khaqan of China comes to Alexander*

Alexander marries Rawshanak but since he wishes to travel the world, he sends her back to Rum along with Aristotle and his treasure for safety's sake. Afterward, Alexander sojourns to Mecca; he visits Queen Nushaba and marched with his army from Hindustan into China. Alexander quarrel with the Khaqan of China ended up when this latter comes to Iran.

This painting depicts the arrival of Khaqan, with attendants and a group of veiled damsels, to Alexander's court. Alexander is seated upon his square golden throne²⁹³ and he immediately spots a damsel to whom he whispers *"The lip, more heart clinging than the pomegranate grain; the tongue, more sugar scattering than rose conserve"*. Later on, Alexander will marry her, as referred to in the text itself. The depiction of Alexander and the damsel bringing their index fingers to their lips is an Iranian pictorial convention to express amazement. Once again the late Isfahan school style is evident in the billowing turbans and the twiggy patterns that enliven the walls. Veiled women, as the damsels depicted here, appear in other Safavid manuscripts paintings²⁹⁴.



► CALLIGRAPHY

This page comes from a still intact album assembled with calligraphy specimens and exercises, several of them signed by the famous Qajar poet and calligrapher Mirza Vesal²⁹⁵, (d. 1845) who probably compiled this album for his second son Mirza Mahmud.(see p.9)

The straightforward composition and balanced script of this *ghazal* from Hafiz, is distinctive of Mir ‘Emad’s beautiful penmanship. Inscribed along the bottom line is “*written by the poor and sinner creature ‘Emad al-Hasani in the year 1002 Hegira*”.

Mir ‘Emad al-Molk Ebrahim al-Hasani (d.1615)²⁹⁶ was one of the most renowned *nasta’liq* calligraphers of Iran. He was born in Qazvin to a family of *sayyed*, and it is said, but not substantiated by contemporary sources, that he studied under the masters ‘Isa Beg Rangkar and Malek Daylami. After spending some time in Tabriz, Mir ‘Emad traveled for several years to the Middle East, although two manuscripts, a *Garshaspnama* dated 1573 and a *Golestan* dated 1589 that he produced are from Qazvin. Since 1595 he worked for Farhad Khan Qaramnlu, an active patron of the arts in the Semnan province.

Following the latter’s death in 1598 Mir ‘Emad went to live in Qazvin, until moving in 1600 to Isfahan, the new royal capital where he presented himself in a letter to the Safavid king ‘Abbas I. In spite of the fact that he became the most prominent calligrapher of his time and with Iranians today considering him to be the greatest master of *nasta’liq* Shah ‘Abbas I grew weary of him. ‘Ali Reza another contemporary calligrapher has the favors of this king²⁹⁷. Mir ‘Emad’s alleged Sunni faith, in a Shi’ite nation, coupled with his arrogant behavior, appears to be the main reasons for his tragic murder by Mas’ud Beg in 1615.

Mir ‘Emad’s rendition of elegant *nasta’liq* script, with his long strokes, many curls, the consistency of letters and smooth elongated lines, is aesthetically breathtaking.

Several other samples of this great master’s work are housed in renowned collections around the world²⁹⁸. Amongst them the Oriental Institute branch in Saint Petersburg²⁹⁹, the Iranian Parliament Library in Tehran, the Topkapy Saray Library in Istanbul, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris and the Astan-e Quds-e Rezavi Library in Mashhad.

Accession N °559. Piece 34

Album page, *qita’*, 7 lines of black fine *nasta’liq* script, signed by ‘Emad al-Hasani in 1002 Hegira.

Azure inner border with polychrome rules, within orange margins.

Ink on paper.

30 x 19,5 cm

Qazvin, Safavid period, 1594

پاکه قصر امل سختست بنیاد

سایر بادیه که بنیاد عمر بر باد

علامت مهبت انم که زیر چرخ کبود

ز هر چه رنگ تعلق پذیرد ارادت

مجدد پستی عهد از جهان سبکست

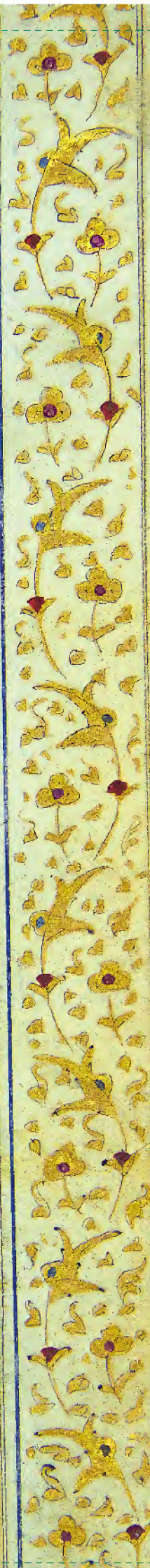
که این عجزه عمر و پس نزارد اما

کتابه الفهر المذنب عماد الحسینی



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 شکر و سپاس مجودی را حلت قریبه که افروخته مخوف است
 در دوزی دهنده بنین و نبات دم گرمی که حوان نقش بر مطیع
 عاصی کشیده و کسره رهیمی که در دوزان رختش در کوش جان پر گناه
 در هر شب بکشد در هر شب نروزی چند بار این نما میرسد که بن عیب
 بل من سابل بل من مستغفر بخشانده که نار خشکوت را آید عصمت
 در سن کرد جباری که نشن ضعف بشیخ خرد دشمنان کرد و سپاس
 در خطرات کایات نوری و منیر و معین و ظهیر و پر و صاحب پر
 محتاج نیست اما بر افضلیت حق و تربت عقل از دیگر حیوانات

در خطرات کایات نوری و منیر و معین و ظهیر و پر و صاحب پر
 محتاج نیست اما بر افضلیت حق و تربت عقل از دیگر حیوانات



متبرکه که در اندیشه و در عینیت
 محبت او را نقصان با او
 در هر شب بکشد در هر شب نروزی چند بار این نما میرسد که بن عیب
 بل من سابل بل من مستغفر بخشانده که نار خشکوت را آید عصمت
 در سن کرد جباری که نشن ضعف بشیخ خرد دشمنان کرد و سپاس
 در خطرات کایات نوری و منیر و معین و ظهیر و پر و صاحب پر
 محتاج نیست اما بر افضلیت حق و تربت عقل از دیگر حیوانات

◀ COLLECTED WORKS OF SA'DI

The greatest Persian poet known as Sa'di and named in Jami's *Nafahat al-Ons* Abu Muhammad Mosharref al-Din Mosleh b. Addollah b. Mosharref, was born in Shiraz.

His choice of Sa'di as a literary pseudonym marks the poet's allegiance to royal members of Salghurid atabegs from the Sa'd dynasty of Shiraz. Sa'di studied Sufi mysticism in the Nezamiyah at Baghdad, where he was greatly influenced by Al-Jowzi and the eminent Suhrawardi (d.ca.1234). Following his time in Baghdad, Sa'di traveled widely throughout the Islamic world.

The experience and wisdom that the great poet garnered throughout his travels were compressed into two works that are universally acknowledged as masterpieces: the *Bostan* and the *Golestan*. These two collections of moralizing anecdotes that celebrate love, friendship and religious devotion were both completed in Shiraz.

Sa'di's collected works in both verse and prose, such as the present one, is known by the generic title of *Kolliyat*, and it is probable that it was Sa'di himself who began to collect and arrange them.

Bisotun provides the earliest record of this task with an index of poems and sections contained in *Kolliyat*, twenty-two in all. These include *qasayed*, *moqa'ttat*, *tarji'at*, *roba'iyat* and *ghazals* poems, which elevate the genre to a level of great importance in Persian literature history. Sa'di's poetry is characterized by technical control, a fluency of diction and a pleasing formality to such an extent that he popularized the *ghazal* as a vehicle for the treatment of human passion, to be surpassed only by Hafiz in this last genre.

His lyrics are imbued with mysticism and his phraseology is full of wisdom.

Sa'di's influence on Persian, Turkish, and Indian literatures is considerable.

From the eighteenth century onwards his works were often translated into European languages. The visual effect of this manuscript, of average size, with its intricate tonal adornments and minute calligraphy, adds naturalness to Sa'di's dynamic narrative.

These sorts of manuscripts were intended to be kept by the reader for daily edifying lecture in private. There is a gold lobed cartouche emblazoned within a rectangle on the frontispiece. Above which is a crest filled with scattering tiny flowers and margins covered with foliage and flowers garland in gold and red, while the calligraphy is in *nasta'liq-shekasta* script within clouds reserved against a gold ground, written horizontally and diagonally in the margins.

Accession N° 582. Folio 1b

Manuscript, 370 leaves, 15 lines per page written in black tiny *nasta'liq* script arranged in continual manner and diagonally in the margins with polychrome rules.

Four ornamented frontispieces, *sarlowh*, in gold and polychrome, thirty small illuminated vignettes inside the text block.

Colophon page (f 370a) mentions "work finished by Muhammad bin Muhammad Sadaq Rafi' Shirazi on 24 Rabi al-Awal 1221 Hegira (11 June 1806)".

Lacquer pasteboard binding, painted with a composition of flowers and a bird.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

21 x 13 cm

Isfahan, Qajar period, 1806

► PRESENT FOR KINGS

The authorship of this thirteenth century compilation of counsels named *Tohfāt al-Moluk*³⁰¹, written in mirror for princes, *ayne amiran*, literature manner, remains an open question.

This anonymous author uses material from early sources such as Rudaki's *Kalīla wa Dimna* and Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* in its counsel to kings. *Tohfāt al-Moluk* is also related to ancient Persian and Islamic wisdom literature tradition contained in such works as those written by Abu Shakur Balki³⁰² and the mythical vizier Bozorgmehr, who is repeatedly quoted in the text. A contemporary *Tohfāt al-Moluk* of 'Alī b. Abū Hafs Esfahani seems to be a mere compilation of distiches extracted from Abu Shakur Balki's work, as Nafisi recently demonstrated. Several scholars have mistakenly put forth the name of Khawaja Ansari (d.1088) as being the author of Present for Kings. Ansari was a spiritual master, a teacher and an orator. It was only at the end of his life, when Ansari was forced by encroaching blindness, and at the insistence of his pupils that he resolved to dictate his main works (Ansari goes blind in 1081). Only the *Mosajjā'at* or ornate prose, with a collection of invocations, reflections and advice, attributed to Ansari, can be related to *Tohfāt al-Moluk*, as both have a similar incipit. Unfortunately, when those verses are compared with other Ansari writings it is difficult to imagine that they are by the same author.

Whoever the true author of Present for Kings, this genre of literature treated the subject of morality and gave out political advice, revealing the ways in which wise men conceived moral thought to be observed by rulers.

The title *Tohfāt al-Moluk* is given on the recto of the second folio and also mentions that the text is divided into forty sections, *bab*, with four counsel on each, *nasihat*.

Whilst the last folio lacks the scribe's name or identification of the original patron, the fine and balanced calligraphy suggest the hand of a great master³⁰³.

This graceful manuscript with his text later set in within blue margins festooned with elegant drawn golden flora was distinctly made in Isfahan by commission of a leading connoisseur of fine calligraphy. The heading in the frontispiece bears a red *kufic* style inscription "God is without parallel" inside a gold lobed cartouche.

Accession N° 565. Folio 1b

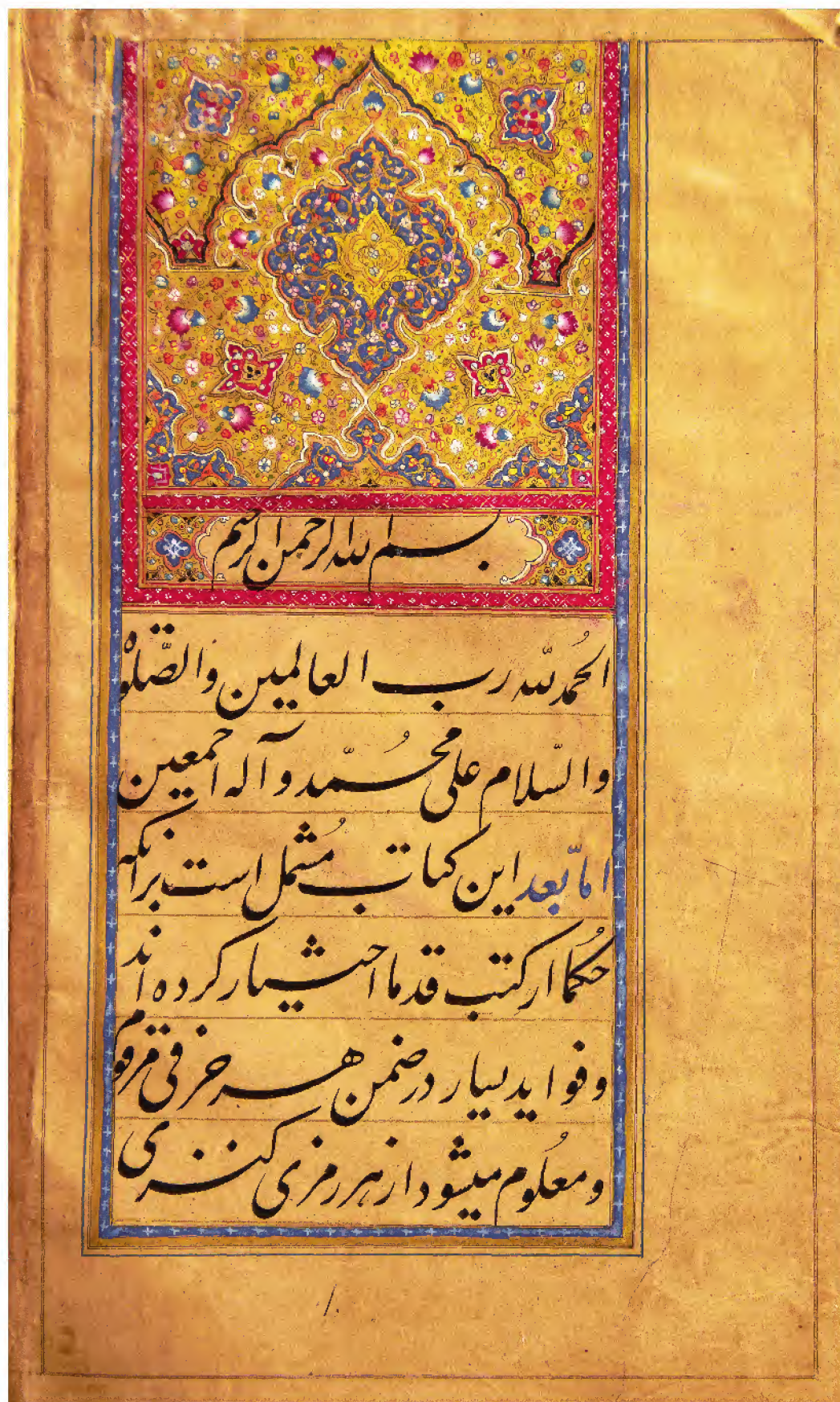
Manuscript, 11 leaves, 7 lines per page written in black elegant *nasta'liq* script arranged in continual text manner, within blue paper margins decorated with golden flowers and leaf scrolls. Frontispiece with an illuminated headpiece, *sarlowh*, in gold and polychrome with a red *kufic* inscription.

Plain chestnut leather binding

Ink, opaque pigments and gold.

27,5 x 18 cm

Isfahan, Safavid period, early 17th century



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوة
والسلام على محمد وآله اجمعين
اما بعد اين كتاب مشتمل است بر
حكا اركتب قدما حشيار کرده اند
وفوايد بيار در ضمن هر حرفي مزمو
ومعلوم ميشود از هر رزمي كنشري

◀ PRESENT FOR VIZIERS

As with the precedent manuscript, the *Tohfāt al-Vozara* or Present for Viziers is written in the literary manner of mirror for princes. Here again authorship is not clearly established.

The forty sections contained in this work are related to *Rahāt al-Ensan*, a versified collection of counsels from the mediaeval Islamic period, which in turn derivate from the ancient *Ketab al-Taj* or Crown's Counsels composed in the ancient Persian wisdom literature tradition.

Present for Viziers seems to be the common name given to those above mentioned forty sections of words of advice. The incipit in the frontispiece is similar to *Tohfāt al-Moluk* and is decorated with an impressive elongated crest filled with a scattering of tiny flowers amongst blooming lotus, roses and jasmines on a golden background, with a central quatrefoil medallion on blue ground with a gold palmette and lattice motifs.

The lobed cartouche, set inside the rectangular headpiece has the *bismillah* (see p.62) written with the same gracefully stretched *nasta'liq* script of the text. On the other hand, decorative elements of the frontispiece bespeak a tradition in Qajar books, where dominance of blue and gold will start to give way, three decades later, to reds and pinks. Another copy of Present for Viziers kept in the Mahfouzi Museum in Tehran was copied by Mir 'Ali Heravi.

Accession N° 568. Folio 1b

Manuscript, 22 leaves, 9 lines per page written in stretched *nasta'liq* script, arranged in continual text manner with polychrome rules.

One illuminated frontispiece, *sarlowh*, in gold and polychrome.

Colophon page (f° 22a) mentions "written for the Home Office vizier Mirza Muhammad 'Ali by the departed 'Abbas, in 1242 Hegira (1826)".

Laquer leather binding, gold speckled ground with central panel and borders decorated with scrolling vine motifs.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

25 x 15,5 cm

Iran, Qajar period, 1826



◀ A SEATED DERVISH

This drawing, which has some visible damage³⁰⁴, of an elderly and slightly hunched seated dervish³⁰⁵, with sparse golden plants and some fruits on the foreground, refers to a contemplative existence. The old dervish is wearing a long robe, a wrapped hat and has a large golden shawl over his shoulders. Only his right hand, holding a rosary, *tasbeih*, of golden beads, is visible. He seems lost in thought. Because the sitter is not identified by any artist's inscription, as often is the case with this kind of drawings³⁰⁶, he could well be one of the wise dervishes known in Isfahan or elsewhere in Persia. Although it does not reveal the identity of this old man, the drawing proves the connection with the famous draughtsman from the seventeenth century who specialized in single sheet pen and watercolor drawings³⁰⁷.

The artist of this portrait uses gold in a bold manner to highlight his drawing. The closed contours and wrinkles of the robe mark a departure from thick accentuated line variations typically found in early drawings. However, the facial expression, the softness of the beard and eyebrows lead one to consider this drawing to be a stirred portrait by some unknown Safavid artist³⁰⁸. In related dervish portrait drawings by Muhammad Yusof (d.1666), housed in the Hermitage Museum of Saint Petersburg as well as one by an anonymous artist in the collection of the Louvre both figures wear a bell-shaped hat and hold a rosary in their hand, as in this drawing³⁰⁹.

Accession N° 1999 .Piece 4

A single sheet, ink drawing with gold highlights on paper.

14 x 11 cm

Isfahan , Safavid period, 17th century

► TREASURE OF MYSTERIES FRONTISPIECE

This double-page frontispiece was extracted from an extremely fine and lavish manuscript of *Makhzan al-Esrar* or *Treasure of Mysteries* written in Turkic. Its author, Mawlana Haydar Turkiguy, was both a poet and panegyrist who dedicated the *Treasure of Mysteries*, (enthused by Nezami's homonym work), to Eskandar Soltan (d.1415). Turkiguy's *Makhzan al-Esrar* composed in 1409 is sometimes mistakenly associated with Nevai and integrated into his poetry manuscripts³⁰. The elegant script of this bifolio written by a master calligrapher is set in panels, with each hemistich *misra'* of the poem alternately positioned to the right or to the left of an ornated square, displaying significant aspects of the practice of illumination taking place in Tabriz and Herat.

The interplay of arabesque and ornamental motifs on three sides reveals the sheer quality of the marginal illumination with its harmonious balance of colors, although much of the lapis lazuli has suffered from flaking. The stylistic decorative traits are consistent with that of the finest Safavid gilders, *mozahheb*. This is visible principally in the combination of subtle almond shape medallions, tendrils and twigs in lateral rectangles alongside the text and also the lobed cartouche in plain gold enclosed in a rectangle above and below the block of text. The princely patronage manuscript, from which this frontispiece was detached, is undoubtedly related to the illuminated double-page frontispiece removed from a Nezami's *Makhzan al-Esrar*, which can now be found in the Louvre museum³¹. Another double-page frontispiece from a manuscript of Hatefi's *Timumama*, dated 1583 at Herat, formerly in the Hagop Kevorkian collection (900-KFo82), also shows a resemblance with the present one.

Accession N° 407. Pieces 1-2

Bifolium, 6 lines per page in black fine *nasta'liq* script contained with ornamented squares.
Illuminated rectangles above and below text
and outer margins at three sides with arabesques
and medallions decoration in polychrome and gold.
Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.
30 x 18 cm
Herat, Safavid period, circa 1540



فتح و شرف آتی و در ای حکیم

فی تنیک آتی پرله غفور رسیم

باشلا پسر ایشینی انیسیم

سرنی کیم ایش باشلا پاک انی مرا

تیکری تیدین تپار اول ایش کشاد

THE AFGHAN GARDEN OF ORAKZAY

In 1747, Nader Shah's former deputy, Ahmad Shah Abdali (d. 1772), from the Sadozi Pashtun tribe, was chosen by a Loya Jirga assembly to be the leader of all Afghan tribes. This was the occasion to change his name to incorporate the royal title of *Dorr-e dorrani* or "Pearl of pearls". He thus reigned under the name of Ahmad Shah Dorrani over a vast territory that stretched from most of present-day Afghanistan to Punjab, including the Kashmir. Ahmad Shah also wrote a collection of *qasida* as well as a poem titled *Love of a Nation* in his native Pashto language. The poetry master in this language was Khushal Khan Khattak (d.1689).

It is during Ahmad Shah's reign that 'Ali Akbar b. Qasem Orakzay, a Naqshband Sufi writes the *Golshan-e Afhgan* or Afghan Garden in 1762, when he was associated with the court of Nur al-Din Popalzai³² in Kashmir.

The Afghan Garden's mixed arrangement of poems in both Persian and Pashto languages, including *qasida*, *ghazal*, *roba'i*, *mutaybat* and other poetry genre and prose, reveals a primarily devotional attitude towards the Prophet Muhammad, Muhammad Baha al-Din Naqshband and different Afghans leaders, such as Polaw Shah, Panuchi or Soltan Muhammad Benbah. Different poems are dedicated to them. Orakzay himself was clearly very well versed in the mystical path. However, his indebtedness to a Naqshband Sufi master (f 89b) is best revealed through the symbolism of placing a specific sequence of paintings at the end of the manuscript. The most striking ones amongst them are aerial views of Mecca and Medina (f 198b, 199a), Orakzay visions of the doors of Paradise (f 197b), a Royal encounter (f 200a) and a gathering of venerable mystics (f 201b).

The attribution of those Kashmiri miniatures, influenced by nearby Punjab painting, to two different artists is sustained by stylistic criteria and related to the coming together of Hindu and Muslim artists, which would not happen in Kashmir until the eighteenth century³³.

Few manuscripts sustain the whole of extent paintings, where mention is made of a Kashmiri origin³⁴, with only a small number dating between 1719 and 1870.

The Afghan Garden illustrations completed around 1780 are consistent with the early Kashmiri school tradition, as seen in the illustrations of a *Shahnama* from 1721³⁵.

Accession N° 538. Folios 200b, 201b, 205b

Manuscript, 225 leaves, varied number of lines per page

written in black and red *nasta'liq* script arranged in continual

text manner and polychrome rules. Six illuminated chapter headpieces,

sarlowh, and eighteen full page paintings (f 195a - 212a).

Black leather binding with embossed gold motifs signed by Baha al-Din Peshawari.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

28,5 x 17,5 cm

Kashmir, Afghan dominion, 18th century



◀ A Sufi master receives Orakzay

The illustration reproduced here shows an unnamed Sufi master, described in an inscription as “*praiseworthy excellence*”. He is talking to the author Ali Akbar Orakzay along with several Sufis and followers. All of them are seated on carpets in front of a pavilion, with the exception of an attendant who is whispering in the ears of the author. The sensitive rendering of many figures is realistic with the Sufi master and Orakzay dominating the composition. Dresses and turbans are those worn at the time. The near symmetry of this scene of reception is unaltered by the distinctive and pronounced features of the faces of each participant. Large noses, small lips, elongated eyes and heavy beards suggest that these are the portraits of actual individuals, not mere stereotypes. This miniature and three other illustrations in the manuscript are painted with elements of Indian origin with a Persian approach, such as the use of the three-quarter profile.

▶ A Royal encounter

Scenes of Royal encounters are frequently depicted in Hindustan manuscripts, but in the present painting the related text explains that this is simply one of Orakzay’s visions.

It depicts a day dream, where a sovereign named Jahangir arrives at the bazaar on horseback, accompanied by his officers, to encounter the author Orakzay’s spiritual guide. Orakzay promptly advances to kiss Jahangir’s feet in a sign of respect.

All the bazaar merchants are standing outside their shops with beautiful brocades and silks in their hands. There are lit candles on mirror walls that add even more brilliance to this encounter.

The composition is centered on the monarch. Jahangir’s identifiable traits are royal ones: he wears an ample turban topped with a feather, subtle patterned coat, a silk brocade robe and a jeweled sword. The pigments in this fairly accomplished outdoor scene are alluring, with a predominance of orange, mauve and cadmium.



A venerable lineage

In the right border of this bewildering illustration, there is an inscription in red *nasta'liq* script that reads "those are the truly *Ansab*, represented exactly as are mentioned in the *Nasab Nama* or Book of Lineage", without any further explanation. In all probability this assembly of mystics seated in a circle around a spiritual leader, *morshed*, reveals Orakzay own attachment to Naqshbandi Sufi order lineage. Following an Iranian pictorial convention to express holiness all protagonists' faces are veiled with flames rising from their heads.



► ANTHOLOGY OF PERSIAN POETRY

This *Majmo'a-ye ash'ar* or anthology of selected poems mingles palimpsest pages written in the seventeenth as well as in the nineteenth century that have been mounted within new blank margins. It contains works by Niyazi, Sa'ed Tabrizi, Haydar Mo'may, Baba Afzali, Ahli Shirazi, Esmā'il Kamali, Khaqani and 'Abd al-Razzaq Beg Donboli. Several folios are handwritten by this last poet known under the penname of "Maftun", and curiously three folios (f5a-8a) contains Plato axioms in Arabic.

It is not unusual to find pages from different periods bound together as the principal consideration was that both the contents and the visual be coherent and aesthetically pleasing. This Anthology is consistent with that principle, and the opening double-page illumination, with text pasted on it, plainly reflects the sense of balance between calligraphy and decorative pattern embellishments.

The double-page frontispiece composition is of kaleidoscopic imagery, with a palette dominated by shiny gold and lapis lazuli, *lajavard*, with quatrefoils and dentate shapes contained in rectangles that lie alongside the text block, enhanced by blue darts extending into the margins. The fine lattice and bud motifs running around the inner fringes at three sides recall the ornamental *kufic* script frequently seen in Timurid and Safavid manuscripts chapter headpieces and in tiny friezes within architectural compositions found in miniatures.

Accession N° 92. Folios 1b-2a

Manuscript, 70 leaves, 15 lines per page written in black *nasta'liq* and *shekasta* scripts arranged in continual text manner with polychrome rules. Ornamented double-page frontispiece in gold and polychrome. An inscription mentions (f 13 a) "*Hasan 'Ali confirms that some folios was written by 'Abd al- Razzaq Beg Donboli*". Different period pages bound together. Red leather binding embossed with gold motifs. Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper. 21 x 14, 5 cm
Tabriz and Isfahan, 17th-19th centuries

وزان پس پالار دین مرصفا
وصی نبی شاهی خورشید
سلامی منسوب از حداد وادگر
بر اولاد امجد او پسر پسر
برای مصیبتی زینت افرازان



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
در آغاز حمد تو ای ذوالجلال
من و ملک و دل بر کشته تال
ز مبادای کردگار و دود
به سحر مستطفا صد درود

LACQUER BINDING

The use of under lacquer coating for pasteboard, *muqqava*, painted binding covers goes back to the last quarter of the fifteenth century and seems to have resulted from the importation of Chinese lacquered wares into Iran. Among them are the incised gold lacquer, *qianjing* in Chinese, and the filled-in lacquer, *tianqi* in Chinese, goods that were preferred by the Timurid court. In most early lacquer bindings the decoration is organized as a central medallion and corner-pieces with borders. Over time, the range of color became richer for decoration through the use of shell dust covered with varnish. Gradually the painted theme came to resemble a miniature page. Lacquer bindings were reserved for poetic or literature manuscripts. The earliest known Persian lacquer binding covers a copy of *Masnavi-ye Manavi* of Rumi and was made in 1483 by the royal books workshop³¹⁶ in Herat, although the oldest one in the Islamic world is an ottoman binding that dates from 1468.

The craft of lacquer binding or *jeld-i rowghan* spread, culminating with Safavid period binders, *sahhaf* or *mojalled*, and their wonderful paintings, primarily of royal hunting and banquet scenes depicted on the covers' outer board³¹⁷. During the Qajar period, lacquering, *kar-e rowghani*, became very fashionable. All kinds of objects: pen boxes, *qalamdan*, mirror cases, *qab-e ayneh*, boxes, *sanduaq*, and bindings, *jild*, flourished with lacquer and wonderful paintings by the foremost artists.

In 1867, the painter and calligrapher Gholam Reza (see p.76) made an outstanding mirror case that was exhibited with great success at the Universal Exhibition in Paris³¹⁸.

The varnish, obtained with a mixture of sandarac resin and linen oil, was called bow oil, *rowghan-e kaman*, because it was originally used to varnish archery bows. Several Persian manuscripts at the Matenadaran have lacquer and painted bindings³¹⁹, but the present one is the only one known to be in a public collection with Armenian inscriptions.

Accession N° 6203. Covers a-d

Both outer covers painted with historical scenes and Armenian inscriptions in *erkatagir* script.

Opaque pigments and varnish on pasteboard.

43,5 x 26 cm

Isfahan or Tehran, Qajar period, 19th century



Armenian king Ara and the Assyrian queen Shamiram

According to Zaryan³⁰ "During the battle between Armenians and Assyrians, King Ara, the son of Aram, was mortally wounded. In order to avoid continuous warfare with the Armenians, Shamiram (Semiramis) the Assyrian queen, reputed to be a sorceress, took his body and prayed to the gods to raise Ara from the dead with the help of Aralez, dog headed creatures, who lick the wounds of Ara to no avail. When the Armenians advanced to avenge their leader, she disguised one of her lovers as Ara and spread the rumor that the gods had brought the king back to life. As a result, the war ended"

In this front cover of the binding King Ara stands at the left side in a garden palace. On the opposite side, Queen Shamiram confers with her army commanders inside the palace.

The entire landscape, as well as the figures, is painted imitating the European style.

Only the outer borders with alternating lobed cartouches containing flowers are in the Qajar taste. The Armenian inscriptions in *erkatagir* script on beige ground cartouches at the underside mention "Handsome Ara" and "Kartos (the renamed son of Ara) and Shamiram", indicate the work of an Armenian artist living in Iran.

Bagavan battle

In order to bring back the king Pap to the Armenian kingdom and to raise an army, the great Catholicos Nerses (353-373) was able to achieve the unification of virtually all the Armenian dynasts. In the meantime Mehrujan, the Sassanian appointed king of Armenia, marched against this Armenian contingent. The decisive battle of Bagavan³²¹ took place on the Arsaias River at the foot of Mount Niphates³²² in 372. Mushegh zoravar-sparapet, the son of Vasak Mamikonian, took part in this crucial battle where the Persian army was defeated and Mehrujan captured and put to death³²³. The artist of this back cover binding vigorously depicts a battle scene where Armenian contingents are crushing the army of the Persian King Shapur. The Armenians appearing at the right, wearing *qalpaq* hats, neatly dispose of the Persian army, recognizable by their turbans. In the center lies an Armenian horseman who has fallen and is asking to be secured. Whether knowingly or not, the artist's rendering is not a historical reconstruction, the banners and dresses are depicted with variations upon contemporary Qajar grab. The Armenian inscription in the lobed cartouche mentions "Mushegh sparapet³²⁴ of Armenians". Regrettably, after Pap's death, another Arsacid, Varazdat, was designated as king of Armenia and he subsequently ordered the assassination of Mushegh Mamikonian.



► PROVISIONS FOR THE HEREAFTER OF BAQIR MAJLESI

This magnificent manuscript of *Zad al Ma'ad*, is an abridged version of 25-volumes *Bihar al-Anwar* or Ocean of Lights, both written by Mulla Muhammad Baqir b. Muhammad Taqi Majlesi (d.1698), in Arabic and Persian. Majlesi was born in Isfahan and he was a pupil of Mullah Sadr, before he was appointed Shaykh al-Islam, in 1678, by the Safavid King Solayman I (1666-1694).

This influential position gave Muhammad Baqir the opportunity to enforce the dissemination of Shi'a doctrine and practices emanating from the Shi'a Twelve Imams' guidance.

He popularized the understanding of hadiths associated with the Shi'a mind through his prolific works, both in Arabic and Persian, following the path of his illustrious predecessors; the jurists Al-Karaki and Shaykh Bahai. The present manuscript is divided into one introduction, *moqaddma*, fourteen chapters, *bab*, and a conclusion, *khatima*. It contains pious observances and prayers for the twelve months of the year as well as for ordinary and special days, giving the rules and regulations to be observed in the performance of religious duties according to the teaching of the venerated Imams. The entire manuscript reflects the aesthetic of the Qajar Imperial house style, with a marked preference for small intricate floral motifs, arabesques and scrolls. The goal of such decoration is to emphasize a legible calligraphy in order to help the reader to better comprehend the meaning of the text. All patterns in Qajar manuscripts are a departure from the decorative modes inherited from the Safavid period, revisited with the criteria of the time where naturalistic detail prevails. Most public libraries around the world prefer having copies of *Zad al Ma'ad* in their collections, not only because Baqir was a renowned figure, but also for its particular religious content. We can relate the present manuscript to other existing copies³²⁵, however only one manuscript dated from 1895 shares a similar lavishness³²⁶. Manuscripts with such royal backgrounds are exceptional. The present one was made for prince Bahman Mirza³²⁷, the son of the presumptive heir to Iran's crown 'Abbas Mirza who died in 1833, one year before his father, the king Fatih-'Ali Shah.

The succession passed on to Abbas Mirza's other son, Muhammad Mirza, later enthroned as Muhammad Shah (d.1848)³²⁸. The extremely fine decoration on this double-page frontispiece contains a central octagonal medallion in the crest with the imprint of Bahman Mirza seal, while above the book title appears in *thuluth* script on a blue lobed cartouche enclosed in a rectangle. The margins are filled with interlocking golden split palmettes with tiny scattering polychrome flowers.

Accession N° 480. Folios 3b-4a

Manuscript, 458 leaves, 14 lines per page written in vocalized black *naskh* script arranged in continual text manner with polychrome rules.

Illuminated opening page with a seal imprint of Bahman Mirza

Ebn Nayeib Saltana 'Abbas Mirza inside an illuminated *shamsa*.

Double-page frontispiece with sumptuous illumination in polychrome and gold. Colophon page (f 281b-282a) mentions

"made by order of Bahman Mirza, the lieutenant of the Realm, Prince 'Abbas, son of Khaqan Fatih-'Ali Shah, in 1260 Hegira (1844), copied by Muhammad 'Ali b. Muhammad Shafi' Tabrizi". Lacquer pasteboard binding, painted with blooming flowers and nightingales within borders of lobed cartouches and medallions.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

36 x 22,5 cm

Tehran or Isfahan, Qajar period, 1844

مقرر گردانیده و از حضرت رسول خدا و ائمه هدی صلوات
الله علیه وعلیه و آله جمیع ادعیه و اعمال بسیار منقول گردیده
که کتب دعا مشحون از آنهاست و این خادم ائمه اطهار علیه السلام
صلوات الله الملك الغفار اکثر آنها را در کتاب بحار الانوار
ایراد نموده ام و اکثر خلا بقراب اعتبار اشغال دنیوی و غیرها
تجصیل آنها و عمل جمیع آنها میسر نیست خواستم منتخبی از
اعمال سال و فضایل ایام و لیالی شریفه و اعمال آنها که با سائید
صححه معتبره وارد شدن است درین رساله ایراد نمایم
که عامه خلق از برکات آنها محروم نباشند و شاید این بنده عاجز
بدعای مغفرت یاد نمایند و مسمی گردانیدم از ابرار العباد
عسی الله ان یهدینا و ایاهم السبیل الرشاد و چون انعام
ایز ساله و آغاز و انجام این عجلاله در زمان دولت شمر
و اوان سلطنت سعادت اثر اعلی حضرت سید سلاطین زمان
و سرور خواقین دوران شیرازه اوراق ملت و دین نقاوه
احفاد سید المرسلین اب و زک کلسان مصطفوی حشر

الحمد لله الذي جعل العباد

هذا كتاب الله

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الْعِبَادَةَ وَسَبِيلًا لِنَيْلِ السَّعَادَةِ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَى وَالصَّلَاةُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْوَرَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلِيٍّ
أَمَّةِ الْهُدَى **باب** بَيِّنَةُ خَاطِي مُحَمَّدٍ بَاقِرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ تَقِيٍّ عَفَى اللَّهُ
عَنْ جُرَائِمِهِمَا بَرِّ الْوَالِحِ صَافِيهِ بَرَادَرَانِ إِيْمَانِي وَخَلَائِي رُو
مِيكَارْدُكَ چُونِ جَنَابِ مُقَدَّسِ اِيَزْدِي تَعَالَى شَاهِ بُرَايِ
هُدَايَتِ كَرِ كَشْتِكَا نِ بَوَادِي جِهَالَتِ وَضَلَالَتِ طَرِيقِ صَوْمِ
وَصَلَاةِ وَدُعَا وَعِبَادَاتِ كِهَ اشْرَفِ وَاقْرَبِ طَرِيقِ نَيْلِ سَعَادَتِ

A PERSIAN COURTIER

This tinted drawing of highborn young men in an outdoor gathering, contains subtle clues as to their social status. Certain details, such as the billowing turban, the light line of varying thickness defining the hem of the robe and the fur-lined cape, recall seventeenth century drawings by Safavid court artists. But the treatment of the youth's physical features with thick dark sideburns, heavily shadowed eyes and the placement of the hands are incompatible with the above-mentioned period.

Although the artist of this tinted drawing remains anonymous, he was indeed a talented Qajar painter with a penchant for Safavid style drawings of young courtiers.

The album in the Matenadaran to which this page belongs is entirely assembled with the same characteristically tinted drawings. This fact alone precludes that it was compiled for a refined patron looking to enhance his taste through the latest works of a Qajar artist.

Similar albums were produced throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

It is quite unusual to find albums that have managed to remain intact, because the desire of collectors for single albums leaves remained constant throughout. The margins from a Persian album kept at Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (W713) have similar Qajar period gold brushed drawings.

Accession N° 1999. Piece 7

Album page, *qita'*, tinted drawing, polychrome
inner borders, within lilac margins painted with
a forest hunting scene in gold.

Ink, watercolor and gold on paper.

29 x 19 cm

Iran, Qajar period, 19th century



A PERI RIDES A COMPOSITE LION

This painting shows a symbolic astrological representation of the sun (Leo) in its house, as often seen in Astrology manuscripts from the Persian and Ottoman world³²⁹.

“Peri”, derived from Persian *par* or wing, are fabulous creatures in Iranian mythology, often represented in miniatures and textiles. They are different from angels, but closely related to fairies. In this painting the *peri* holds an effigy of the sun in his right hand while riding a composite lion.

The composite body of the lion is made of an interwoven group of human, animals and birds. The earliest Armenian known composite animal is a drawing representing Bucephalus, Alexander the Great’s horse, made by Grigoris the Catholicos of Aghtamar in 1536, on a folio from an Armenian version of *Alexander Romance*³³⁰.

In Persian manuscripts, the earliest known composite animal illustrates a *Hadiqat al-Haqiqa* of Sanai made in 1569 at Herat³³¹. The origin and meaning of composite animals and figures in Islamic works of arts has not yet been satisfactory explained³³².

The tradition of composite figures seems to have ancient roots; however the conception and connection of this imagery between different artistic cultures remains veiled. Mughal and Persian artists produced very fine composite animals during the whole of the seventeenth century and beyond. Related album pages with compositions similar to the present painting of *peri* riding a lion appear in eighteenth century albums from Kashmir, two of these are housed in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Dresden and a third one which served as model to the Iranian artist of the painting reproduced here is to be found in a collection in New York³³³. The original intention behind these refined and fanciful composite figures carry a more sophisticated message than the simple appeal for otherworldly images that helps to hold the viewer’s interest.

Accession N° 1999. Piece 3

Album page, *qita'*, painting, inner border
of meandering floral vine with polychrome rules,
within ginger margins.

Opaque pigments and gold on paper.

32,5 x 22 cm

Iran, Qajar period, circa 1800





LIGHTS OF CANOPUS OF KASHIFI

Hosayn ibn ‘Ali Va‘iz Kashifi was a prolific writer of Persian prose. He is known by the pseudonym *al-va‘iz* or preacher, on account of his standing and eloquence. Kashifi was either born in Baybak or Sabzavar and lived for about twenty years in the court of Soltan Hosayn Bayqara at Herat. He wrote numerous works ranging from several *tafsir* or commentaries on the Quran, to treatises in astronomy, astrology, alchemy and ethics.

He is chiefly remembered however for *Anvar-e Suhayli*, commonly known as Lights of Canopus, written at the suggestion of Timurid amir Ahmad al-Suhayli, and for his collection of biographies called *Rauzat al-Shuhada‘* completed in 1502. The Tales of Bidpay, written in Sanskrit around the end of third century, was translated into Pahlavi in the sixth century and into Arabic as Fables of *Kalila wa Dimna* by Ebn Moqaffa‘, circa 750. These stories later appear in Persian adaptations by Rudaki for a Samanid king, circa 940 by Abu Ma‘li Nasrollah in Gazna, circa 1145 and finally, at the end of the fifteenth century, by Kashifi, who was associated with the famous Herat vizier Mir ‘Ali Shir Navai. A later Persian version was written by Abu al-Fazl for the Mughal emperor Akbar (d.1605) called *‘Iyar-i Danish* or Criteria of Wisdom.

Kashifi’s version was the most popular, even though it is written in a highly artificial prose. His Ottoman translation by Chelebi, called *Homayun-nama* was to become well known in Europe. The French translation of 1644 most certainly influenced La Fontaine in the writing of his Fables. This manuscript bears a striking illuminated frontispiece that marks the beginning of the preface, which is shown here. The glittering richness of the headpiece is enhanced rather than unbalanced by the top crest decorated with four blue quatrefoils and intricate flower lattice on a gold background, surrounded at three sides by bands containing a single lobed cartouche and split palmettes in blue, red and gold. A foliage and flowers garland in gold, scarlet and skyblue covers the margins.

To compare similar Qajar period manuscripts of *Anvar-e Suhayli* we can mention the one from 1813 kept at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York (M.128)³⁹⁴ and a second one, unpublished, dated 1847, in the collection of the Walter Art Museum, Baltimore (W599), with the only difference that both of these examples are illustrated.

Accession N° 292. Folio 1b

Manuscript, 133 leaves, 23 lines per page written in black and red neat *nasta‘liq* script arranged in continual text manner with polychrome rules. Frontispiece with an illuminated headpiece, *sarlouh*, in gold and polychrome. Margins decorated with golden leaf scrolls and flowers garland. Colophon page (f 133a) mentions “*manuscript specially made for Hajji Muhammad Hosayn*”.

Plain brown leather binding.

Ink, gold and gouache on paper.

28 x 19 cm

Tehran, Qajar period, 19th century

A SAFINA ALBUM

These Persian poetry miscellanea commissioned by Qasem ‘Ali at the time of Shah Safi I (d.1642), with material that was added all along the seventeenth century, contain an assortment of poetry, epistolary texts *maktubat*, miniatures, etchings and drawings. This type of anthology is called *safina* or vessel in Arabic, a term that refers to a specific oblong shape, small enough to be carried in one’s garments. Some *safina* combine similar poetry genre but nearly all are a selection of poems assembled by theme or according to personal taste. The decorative experiments in the early Timurid *safinas*, with their original text positioning and marginal stenciled patterns, prepared the ground for single sheet calligraphy specimens practice throughout the sixteenth century. The most reputed calligrapher who worked on this manuscript is Abd al-Rashid Daylami (d.1638), the nephew and pupil of Mir ‘Emad, who after his master’s death immigrated to Mughal India (f 141b). The paintings and drawings are by anonymous artists except for one self-portrait signed by Mir Mansur (f 15 a).

Accession N° 1036 . Folios 49a, 71b

Manuscript, 221 leaves, uneven lines per page written in black and red *nasta’liq* and *shekasta* scripts, arranged in one and two columns, sometimes written diagonally.

One headpiece, *sarlowh*, and several drawings, paintings and etchings with some ornamented margins.

Brown leather binding with motifs stamped in gold.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

21 x 12 cm

Isfahan, Safavid period, 17th century



◀ A young European

During the Safavid reign of the seventeenth century, the popularity of line drawings and portraits influenced by Western models were increasingly in demand. European traders, missionaries, visitors and diplomats travelling to Isfahan brought with them numerous works of art, prints and oil paintings from their own countries. Several European painters such as the Dutchmen P. Van Angel and B. Van Lockhorst also settled in Iran³³⁵. This situation ensured not only the availability of Western art in Isfahan but also contributed to the development of a Europeanized mode of painting in Iran.

The repertoire of themes is largely dominated by idealized or naturalistic portraits of well-dressed young men and young women holding cups, wine flasks, *sorahi*, or flowers. On occasion they wear European attire as is the case here, and the painter Reza-ye ‘Abbasi (d.1635) was among the first to portrait Persian youth in European dress³³⁶, reflecting wistful thoughts. The standing youth in this painting, executed in the 1660s, perhaps Portuguese is dressed in European fineries such as his felt hat, brocade cloak, intricate lace collar and baggy trousers. He holds a porcelain underglazed cobalt blue decorated wine jar and is somewhat making eye contact with a bird standing on a small rock in the background. The pose and facial expression reflect the pictorial idiom of modeling and shading inherited from Western art. The *nasta‘liq* script surrounding this young figure is a poem of Muhammad Qoli Salim, an Iranian poet who worked and died in Kashmir, and who, at times, is accused of having plagiarized Saeb Tabrizi’s (d.1676) poetry. Another relevant portrait of a young European holding a similar porcelain jar³³⁷ painted in 1675 by Mo‘in Mosavver³³⁸ and a standing young Persian painted by Reza-ye ‘Abbasi³³⁹, are stylistically close to the present painting.

▶ Wildfowl and calligraphy

The story of the arrival of Europeans prints at the Safavid court, and the effect they had on artists is well known by their specific relationship to album pages. Original European etchings mounted as an album page are scarce in the Iranian world, but more frequently seen in albums from Mughal India. Here the selected etching comes from a page of *Volatilum Varii Generis Effigies* edited by Ahasuerus van Londerseel in Amsterdam, with original plates by Nicolaes de Bruyn (d.1656). This chiaroscuro engraving with the inscription “Nco de B fecit 1594” is highlighted by borders painted with blossoms on a rose background. On the upper side of the page is written a hemistich in elegant *nasta‘liq* script that reads “O bashful lover at present deprived from your beloved”. This composite folio arrangement was primarily intended to astound a Persian viewer at the time.





CALLIGRAPHY

This calligraphy of a ghazal from Hafiz's Divan is written diagonally and along the left side. Two triangles on top and the bottom corners are filled with the partially erased inscriptions "Khawaja Hafiz Shirazi" and "written by the humble and poor (.....) his sins been forgiven".

A Hegira date with only the numbers 9 and 6 visible is written in the small square on the left side of the sheet. These triangular corners, sometimes called *lachak* or scarf in Persian and often seen in calligraphy specimen sheets filled either with inscriptions or decorative patterns are connected to *tamgha kardan*, the ancient tradition practiced in chancelleries of tearing off one bottom corner of royal decrees.

As a result of the raids on Herat brought about by Shaybanid 'Obaydollah Khan (d.1533), calligraphers and painters were brought, for the last time in 1529, to work at the Bukhara court atelier- library. Manuscripts and calligraphy specimens displaying a sophisticated taste continued to be produced in Bukhara under 'Obaydollah Khan's successors.

The beauty and the strength of this calligraphy lie in the balanced and graceful shaping of the eight lines of script. The structure of pages bearing calligraphy specimens is often more complicated than that of the paintings. Precious examples by sixteenth century Persian masters were collected, like the present one, by affluent connoisseurs and mounted on highly decorated album pages.

Here the margins are ornamented with fine golden flowery interlace motifs. Inside a lobed medallion placed on top of the sheet, two seated young men are drinking. The whole arrangement is characteristic of calligraphy specimen sheets, *qita'* executed during the Shaybanid rule of Bukhara³⁴⁰. A small oblong shape album, *safina*, from Bukhara with calligraphy signed in 1526 by Mir 'Ali al-Hosayni Heravi bears similar painted figures inside lobed cartouches³⁴¹.

Accession N° 407. Piece 4

Album page, *qita'*, 8 lines written in black elegant *nasta'liq* script, arranged diagonally and vertically, inner border of meandering floral vine with polychrome rules. Margins decorated with golden interlace flowery and figures painted inside lobed medallion on top.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper.

27,5 x 17 cm

Bukhara, Shaybanid period, circa 1554



۳۳







◀ FIERCE BATTLES

In the first battle scene depicted in the front cover of this binding, the army of Iran, which appears at the right side, has the best of the combat. They are lead by a king mounted on a steed who wears the familiar high pointed crown favored by Fatih-‘Ali Shah (d.1834). He is confronting the armed forces headed by an Indian king, seated in a palanquin carried by an elephant. This latter static appearance, contrasts with the triumphant countenance of the Persian ruler.

In the second battle scene depicted in the back cover of the same binding, we see the Persian king on horseback with a bold mustache slaying an enemy during the assault. On the right side the rival Ottoman king wearing a white tarbush with aigrettes appears anxious. The soldiers of both armies are entwined in a fierce battle. In the background the artillery canons are in action. Early period Safavids made it a point of honor to make war merely with blades and bows while the Ottomans had already in the early fifteenth century introduced firearms.

Along with banners, kettledrums, horns, arms and armors associated with most of extant painted Iranian war scenes, details such as the depictions of elephants and soldiers’ helmets characterize in both battle scenes the work of a committed book workshop artist from the Qajar period; perhaps the same one who painted some of the illustrations inside the *Shahnama* manuscript that covers this binding. (see p.64)

The composition of these battle scenes is significant for its realistic handling of the costumes and headgear. The pronounced shading with a glowing contrast of light renders the armies’ fierce attack even more vivacious. The painter has included narrative elements of battles described in the *Shahnama*, but has avoided depicting the usual bloodshed, thus devising a conventional way in which to represent opposing armies facing off.

Both cover illustrations recalls the large Qajar paintings on the wall of central bays at the Chihil Sutun Palace at Isfahan representing the battle of Nader Shah and the Mughals and the the battle of Chaldiran between Shah Esma‘il and the Ottomans³⁴².

Accession N° 535. Covers a-d

Book of King’s laquer binding painted with war scenes.

Opaque pigments and varnish on pasteboard.

35,5 × 23,5 cm

Tehran, Qajar period, 1845

► WONDERS OF CREATION OF QAZVINI

Zakariya b. Muhammad b. Mahmud al-Qazvini (d.1283) was a celebrated geographer and natural historian born at Qazvin. He held the office of judge in Hilla during the reign of the last Abbasid caliph. Qazvini wrote a geography book in Arabic called *Kitab al-Bilad* in 1262. In 1280 he completed the Wonders of Creation and Oddities of Existence, known as Qazvini's Cosmography book, dedicated to 'Ala al-Din 'Ata-Malek b. Joveyni (see p.49)

The original text is divided into two sections *maqala*. The first contains descriptions of the firmament, the angels that inhabit it, the planets and the signs of the zodiac. The second section contains the earthly world and its eight climates: fire, thunder, the sea and the monsters that live there, the earth and the mountains, rivers, minerals, plants, animals, birds, reptiles and fabulous creatures. Qazvini cites numerous sources, including Greek philosophers, the Hebrew Torah and the Quran, but he omits to mention previous related works such as Muhammad b. Ahmad Tusi Salmani's '*Ajayebnama*' written circa 1170 or his contemporary Al-Dimashqi's Cosmography opus.

The arrangement of the text of the Wonders of Creation was never definitely fixed, since manifold versions of both Persian and Turkish translations exist. The oldest recorded copy in Arabic dates from 1280, when Qazvini was still alive and can be found in the collection of the Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek³⁴⁸.

The present Persian version of '*Ajayeb al-Makluqat wa gharaib al-Mawjudat*' is acephalous, and like most other existent manuscripts, it contains many vignette illustrations, designed to be placed within the text block. In fact this manuscript which originated in India during the sixteenth century has a few unfinished illustrations. The numerous small vignettes, which show all kind of plants, animals, angels and fabulous creatures, were painted by Hindustani artists in a naturalistic style that gives them an immediate appeal. There is a comparable manuscript from Mughal India dated 1538 with similar illustration in the National Medical Library at Bethesda (Ms.Incun.P1).

Accession N° 1746. Folio 343b

Manuscript, 435 leaves, 13 lines per page written in black and red regular *nasta'liq* script arranged in continual text manner with numerous small paintings.

Black leather binding with stamped golden motifs.

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper,

27 x 16,5 cm

Northern Mughal India, 16th century

Wicked creatures tamed by King Solomon

In the Islamic world King Salomon is considered to be a prophet and one of the proverbial Wise men. He has supernatural powers; he can speak to birds, he can fly, he has in his possession a black stone, a mirror and a ring that are all three magical, but above all he controls both the demons and the wicked spirits. This page belongs to chapter twenty-one of the Wonders of Creation and treats the subject of Efrits and Jinns³⁴. This illustration of various frightening creatures with miscellaneous bodies bears witness to the naïve portrayal of most of the paintings in this manuscript. The text related to this illustration mentions that “*Qaftitush*” with others Jinns, who were said to have been chained up by King Salomon, escaped and returned to their evil ways after his death.

گدشت بر چهاربای و دوسری بر کتف سرو چون شیرش چون نخل دیگری گدشت و پان
 علیه السلام یکتای پرسید و ندید کرد



مفضل فی امور حبیبیه فعلها الغفاریت سلیمان علیه السلام من مکی است نام او

کویند



NOTES

INTRODUCTION TO THE COLLECTION

- 1 Catalogued in Matenadaran as “Arabic script manuscripts collection”.
- 2 Established in 1815 by Joachim, the grandson of Khoja Ghazar (Lazar) from New Julfa of Isfahan.
- 3 O.Yeghanyan., A. Zeitunian, P. Antabian, *Catalogue of Manuscripts of Mashtots Matenadaran*, vol. I, Erevan, 1965, p. 190.
- 4 Bulletin of Matenadaran, 17, p. 343.
- 5 Matenadaran, Archive of Catholicosate, f. 1e, doc. 664, 690; Archive of Melik-Shahnazarians, f. 241, doc. 27, 39, 43, 44.
- 6 Mirza Yusof Nersesov, *A Truthful History*, Yerevan, 2000, p. 34.
- 7 A copy is kept at Matenadaran (N° 239).
- 8 Archives of Armenian History, vol. 4, Ghukas Catholicos (1780-1800), Tiflis, 1899, p. 741.
- 9 Ali Piriniya, *Hakim Zojjaj, Homayun Nama/Tarikh-e manzum*, II Vol. Tehran 2005.

PERSIAN POETRY AND LITERARY GENRE

- 10 G. Lazard, 1968-91, pp. 595-632.
- 11 *Tarikh-e Sistan*, M. Gold (trad.), Rome, 1976.
- 12 Sanai's *Hadiqat al-haqiqah* is usually regarded as the first specimen of mystical *masnavi* in Persian poetry.
- 13 The early use of this term is found in a table of contents introducing an anthology dedicated to Baysonqor in 1420 (MIK, Berlin, I 4628) and also in a *Monsha'at* of Yazdi (TSK, R 1019, f 57-61).
- 14 Literary means: house of the books.
- 15 F. Richard, 2003, pp.34-43.

THE BOOK WORSHIP TRADITION / ILKHANIDS

- 16 D. Clévenot in *L'art du livre Arabe*, 2001, pp. 110-137, several illustrations of those manuscripts.
- 17 For a complete English verse translation see A. Warner & E. Warner, 9 vols, London, 1905-25.
- 18 R. Hillenbrand, 2002, pp. 135-167.
- 19 D.L. James, 1980, n° 44, 47 and 48.
- 20 B. Schmitz, 1997, pp. 9-24.
- 21 S. Blair, 1995, is dedicated to Khalili collection section while Rice & Gray, 1976, to the Edinburgh one.
- 22 Amongst them the Armenian painter Avag, who also practiced in Tbilisi and Soltaniya.
- 23 Commonly called “Demotte Shahnama”, after the Parisian dealer who owned it in 1910 and who unfortunately, for commercial reasons, detached the folios and pasted some illustrations on irrelevant text pages. We have records that this Shahnamah was previously in the possession of the royal house of Qajar, with its margins enlarged with Russian paper (Cyrillic watermarks “P.G” and date 1839 are visible). The Armenian dealer Shemavon Malayan acquires it in Iran circa 1905.
- 24 W.M. Thackston, 2001 pp.4-18.
- 25 O. Grabar & S. Blair, 1980, n° 1-58, illustrations of those extant pages.
- 26 This influential calligrapher from the 14th century, achieved great fame with his architectural inscriptions and Quran copies in possession of CBL, Dublin, TIEM, Istanbul and the Astan-e Quds-e Library, Mashhad.

INDJOUS

- 27 Lowry, Beach, Marefat and Thackston, 1988, p. 77.

JALAYERIDS

- 28 R. González de Clavijo, 1582. This Castilian ambassador chronicle gives the only known description of this palace, before his destruction.
- 29 See the 1372 royal decree (*firman*) of Soltan Ahmed Jalayirid (BnF, Paris, Supl. Persan 1960) and several other documents with this script housed in the Matenadaran, published in H.D. Papazian, Vol II, 1968.
- 30 When the king of Khawarazm tests Mehr's skills in *ensha* writing practice. See also M.B.Najafi, 1989, n° 138.
- 31 The original manuscript was written in Bihar, India. See a printed edition by Iraj Afshar, Tehran 1997.
- 32 F. Richard, 1997, p. 71, ill. 33.
- 33 S. Bashir, *Enshrining Divinity: the death and memorialization of Fazlollah Astarabadi in Hurufi thought*, in *The Muslim World* 90, 2000, pp. 289-308.
- 34 He is the first known artist to incorporate his signature in a miniature ("Wedding night of Hoday and Hodayun", folio 45b from a fragmentary Quintet of Khawaju Kirmani, painted ca. 1390). See below note 36.

TIMURIDS

- 35 With the exception of a massive Quran copied by 'Omar Aqta' for Timur Beg, currently with its pages dispersed among various collections, is believed to have been stored at Bibi Khanum Mosque in Samarcand by Timur grandson Olog Beg. See more details in *Masterpieces* New York, 2011, pp. 175-176 and Sabit Jazari's thesis in *Daneshgah-e Honar*, Isfahan, 1956.
- 36 He was inaccurately credited with the invention of *nasta'liq* and often mistaken with Mir 'Ali b. Ilyas Tabrizi Bavrashi who copied a fragmentary Quintet of Khawaju Kirmani in 1396, BL, London (Add. 18113).
- 37 Kept at Freer Gallery of Art, Washington (F 1931. 32). The colophon date is illegible, but the scribe gives his name as 'Ali b. Hasan Soltani, who wrote it in Tabriz.
- 38 *De Bagdad à Ispahan*, 1994, n° 28; *The Chester Beatty Library*, Dublin, 2001, n° 68.
- 39 One copy is dispersed between different collections and the second one is kept at TKS, Istanbul (H 1653).
- 40 C. Gruber, *El Libro de la Ascensión, Mi'rajnama Timúrida*, Valencia, 2008.
- 41 A. Adamova, 2012, pp.62-123, the 38 paintings are illustrated.
- 42 Full account in *1420 Matla' al- Sa'dayn va Majm'a Bahrain* by Kamal al-Din Abd al-Razzak Samrqandi, *Masterpieces*, New York, 2011, pp. 179-80.
- 43 C. Huart, Paris, 1908, pp. 208-211. The author gives a full list of those artist names, but impossible to say on what grounds. While Dust Muhammad in his 1544 album preface, mentions Sayyed Ahmad, Khawaja 'Ali and Qevam al-Din were amongst them. Samarqand's *Matla' al-Sa'dayn* (f° 614a) mentions that Azhar, 'Abdollah Heravi and Shaykh Mahmud were associated with the Timurid court workshop in Herat.
- 45 Colored pages are found in Qurans from Maghreb, see a brownish-purple six volume Quran endowed to Almohad Mosque in Tunis, split between BnF, Paris (Arabe 389-92) and National Library of Russia (Dorn 41).
- 46 Respectively at Bodleian Library, Oxford (Pers. E 26) and BL, London (Add. 7759).
- 47 Detroit Institute of Art (N° 30.323).
- 48 D. Roxburgh, 2005, fig.81, 82,83, a *Ghazaliyat* made in Shiraz and dated 1449 (CBL, Dublin, Pers.129).
- 49 See an Anthology decorated with colored stencils dated 1431 and made in Yazd (BL, London, Or. 8193).
- 50 An expression otherwise used to describe the scattering of gold coins as gesture of largesse.
- 51 BL, London (Or.7465).
- 52 Although *afshan* practice was already popular in Japan, Qazi Ahmed states that Gyath al-Din Muhammad Shirazi invented this technique in 1535, without providing any evidence of it.
- 53 TIEM, Istanbul (n° 2046).
- 54 Dust Muhammad, 1936. Erroneously reported that binder Qevam al-Din had invented leather-filigree work.
- 55 D. Roxburgh, 2005, fig. 89-90.
- 56 TIEM, Istanbul (n° 1926), in the late 19th century several folios were removed.
- 57 The primary meaning of this term is "scraps joined together", like the worn patchwork of the dervish's cloak.
- 58 Those calligraphers are Yaqut al Musta'semi, Mubarakshah b. Qutub, Arghun al-Kamil, 'Abdollah Sayrafi, Ahmad b. al-Sohraverdi, Yahya Jamal al-Sufi and Haydar al-Hoseyni.
- 59 TSK, Istanbul (H 2310).
- 60 D.J. Roxburgh, 2005, pp. 37-83. Analytical study of this album, with several pages illustrations.
- 61 The ransom in 1472 by Mustafa, son of Sultan Mehmed II, to free Turkmen Yusof Mirza, included albums and manuscripts (quoted by J. Raby in *Colloquies on Art in Asia*, 1985, p.46).
- 62 Respectively in possession of Fundação Gulbenkian (LA.161) and the BL, London (Add.27.261).
- 63 See A. Caiozzo, *The Horoscope of Eskandar Soltan as cosmological vision in the Islamic world*, in *Religions and Society*, 2005, Berlin- New York, Walter de Gruyter (ed.), pp. 115-144.

- 64 He ended up blind and a recluse leading an ascetic life, but the date of his death remains unknown.
- 65 As happens with calligrapher Mahmud al-Kitab al-Hosayn who signs both Anthologies for Ebrahim Soltan and Prince Baysonqor.
- 66 Lentz & Lowry, 1989, pp. 366-374. See also a Quran by his hand in the MET, New York (13.228.1).
- 67 Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ouseley, Add. 176).
- 68 E. Sims, 2000, pp. 119-127, mentions those manuscript dates and whereabouts.
- 69 John Greaves from Oxford was the first to publish in 1648 Olog Beg's Treatise with commentaries.
- 70 F. Richard, 1997, p. 78, n° 42, colophon mentions "made for the sultan Zahir al-Din Olog Beg Kouraken".
- 71 While Navai's brother Darvish 'Ali becomes governor of Balkh and later on the royal librarian.
- 72 For a *Kolliyat* of Sa'di, see the magnificent 1526 copy kept at BnF, Paris (Sup. Turc 316-317).
- 73 N.B. Najafi, 1989, ill. 112-117, copied by Mir 'Ali al-Kateb and illuminated by Yari, a pupil of Mulla Wali.
- 74 J.W. Garrett Library, John Hopkins University, Baltimore.
- 75 MET, New York (63. 210).
- 76 Mostafa 'Ali, 1926. Describes how Behzad along with other artists accompanied Shah Esmā'il I to the battlefield at Chaldiran. E. Behari, *Behzad: master of Persian art*, London, 1996, pp. 184-6, published Shah Esmā'il's royal appointment decree, but a chronological discrepancy calls into question the authenticity of both contentions.
- 77 A frontispiece of this treatise from Mughal period is in the MET, New York (55.121.10).
- 78 *Kholasat al-Akhbar* of Khvandamir, written in 1520, was dedicated to him.
- 79 The first kept in Tehran contains 99 samples while the Berlin album had only 24 samples by 'Ali Heravi.
- 80 Except that Qazi Ahmed mentions Mir 'Ali inscriptions on the shrine of Imam Reza at Mashhad, containing a chronogram giving the date 1533.
- 81 M. Bayani, 1966-69, pp. 876-880, list of extant works of this calligrapher.
- 82 Artists extend or contracts their names with their preceding affiliation, *nasab*, or different honorifics names, *laqab*, and sometimes they attaches their affiliation to a place, *nisba*, as is the case here.
- 83 Copies differ, but the one at the National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg (Dorn 454) is by Mashhadi hand.
- 84 F. Richard, 1997, n° 52, 56, 57, 92, 93, 104, 109 and 109; *Masterpieces*, New York, 2011, n° 127, 129.
- 85 Khvandamir, 1857, vol. 3, pp. 342-345. Include a short biography of Mashhadi.
- 86 *Masterpieces of Persian Painting*, 2005, pp. 86-89. M. Bayani, 1966-69, pp. 272-280, with Nur biography.
- 87 A *Divan* of Amir Khosrow also bears the signature of this gilder (BnF, Paris, Sup. Persan 636).

TURKMENS

- 88 "Turkmen" or "Torkman" are two forms of the same name, according to Turkic or Persian etymology.
- 89 A complete biography of this calligrapher in J. Sauvaget, *Art Islamica*, vol. 5 part 1, 1938, pp. 103-106.
- 90 See a *Divan* of Qasemi dated 1459 (Royal Academy, London) and a *Sad Kalima* dated 1464 (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM 00518) copied by this calligrapher.
- 91 This calligrapher copied Katebi's *Divan* in 1456, the earliest recorded commission of Pir Budaq.
- 92 F. Richard, 1997, n° 50; 60.
- 93 B.W. Robinson, 1991, pp. 29-30; T. Lentz & G. Lowry, 1989, n° 139.
- 94 A. Tehrani, *Kitan Diarbakriya*, 2 vols. Ankara, 1962-64. A seminal work on Aq Qoyunlu history.
- 95 Despite his strong ties to Herat, he copied several manuscripts in Tabriz for Soltan Ya'qub Beg.
- 96 New York Public Library, Spencer collection (Persian, Ms. 14).
- 97 TSK, Istanbul (H 2153 and 2160), these albums contains have been altered over time.
- 98 TIEM, Istanbul (ms. 1978) with 202 paintings; University Library, Istanbul (F 1406) with 109 paintings.

SHAYBANIDS

- 99 Actually Uzbekistan, the Arabs called it "ma wara al-nahr" meaning beyond the river (Amu-darya).
- 100 He signed a few miniatures in a 1529 Anthology (Institute of Oriental Studies, Saint-Petersburg, C 860) and Hafei's *Haft Manzar* dated 1537 (Freer Gallery, Washington, 56.14).
- 101 According to Y. Porter, Hasan Nasari quotes this artist's career in *Mozaher-e Ahbab*, written before 1566.
- 102 T. Pugachenkova & O. Galerkina, 1979, n° 9.
- 103 Bodleian Libraries, Oxford University (Ouseley 19).
- 104 Ashrafi-Aini, 1979, pp. 250-262.
- 105 National Library of Russia, Saint Petersburg (Dorn 559).
- 106 T. Pugachenkova & O. Galerkina, 1979, n° 25, 26 and 27.

- 107 Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, Cologny (CB 30).
- 108 Translated by T. W. Arnold in *Bulletin of the School of oriental Studies*, Vol. V, part 4, London, 1930.
- 109 BnF, Paris (Sup. Persan 1146).
- 110 Fundação Gulbenkian, Lisbon (LA 177).
- 111 Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad (Acc. N° 1611).
- 112 *Fi ayam al-dowlat* (made under the reign of); *be rasm* (commissioned by) or *ba ihtiman* (supervised by).
- 113 TSK, Istanbul (R. 1964, f 107a).
- 114 M.M. Ashrafi-Aini, 1979, p.270.
- 115 Golsetan Palace Library, Tehran (Inv. 2179); see one illustration in Melikian-Chirvani, 2007, p. 428.
- 116 CBL, Dublin (Pers. 297).
- 117 T. Pugachenkova & O. Galerikina, 1979, n° 64-67.
- 118 See Yves Porter's article « *Faihad le peintre* », in *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale*, 3/4, 1997, pp. 267-278.

SAFAVIDS

- 119 He was the son of Shaykh Haydar Safavi and Halima-Katherine (the daughter of Theodora of Trebizond).
- 120 Those tribes (*oymaq*) are: Shamlu, Rumlu, Ustajlu, Takhalu, Zul-Qadir, Qajari and Afshari.
- 121 Still the most influential Shi'a legal compendia in Iran is the *Shara al-Islam* by Najm al-Din Helli (d. 1277).
- 122 M. Szuppe, 1994-1995, pp.211-253 and pp. 61-105, with a complete genealogy of this dynasty.
- 123 *Tadhkerat al-Muluk*, 1943, pp. 125-126.
- 124 Topkapi Saray Library (H 762) Three folios removed were formerly in the Keir collection, Richmond, see two illustrations in B.W. Robinson et al. 1976, pls. 19; 21.
- 125 Literally « crown of the lion (imam 'Ali) », made of twelve red caps superposed with a baton end, worn by Safavids to honor their Twelver Shi'ism faith, it became unfashionable around 1570.
- 126 Melikian-Chirvani, 2007, n° 7-8, and *Hunting for Paradise*, 2003, pp. 74-75.
- 127 The British Museum, London (1948.12-11 023).
- 128 *Wonders of Creation*, 2010, pp. 174-175.
- 129 *Hunting for Paradise*, 2003, p.80-81, authors situate it circa 1520, but we believe it to be a later work.
- 130 O.F. Akimushkin, in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, Vol V., 2003, p.560.
- 131 M. Bayani, 1966-69, pp.425-26, the members of the "Abdi family used the epithet al-Shahi. Several specimens of his calligraphy dedicated to Shah Esma'il are found in the Bahram Mirza's album kept at TKS, Istanbul (H 2154).
- 132 This position of *ishik-aqasi- bashi*, like some others government officers was hereditary.
- 133 A year later Shams al-Din designed the monumental *nasta'liq* inscriptions in 'Ali Qapu mosque at Isfahan.
- 134 Bodaq Monshi Qazvini, 1576, the author brings up Behzad's penchat for drinking wine.
- 135 B. Schmitz, 1997, p. 29, a list of them.
- 136 D. James, 1992, pp. 144-163, a list of signed and attributed works of Rurzbihan Muhammad.
- 137 V. Loukonine & A. Ivanov, 1995, p. 179, ill. 173; Melikian-Chirvani, 2007, n°28.
- 138 The Venetian envoy Michele Membré witnessed Tahmasp's court life. His account *Relazione di Persia* was translated by A. H. Morton as *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539-42)*, London, 1993.
- 139 See the facsimile edition *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, MET, New York, 2011.
- 140 Soudavar & Beach, 1992, p. 259 and C. Adle article in *Studia Iranica*, 22, 2(1993), pp. 219-96.
- 141 M.B. Dickson & S.C. Welch, pp. 3-7.
- 142 'Abd al-Samad emigrated to India and entered the service of Homayun at Kabul (1549). He remained an important artist producing paintings for Emperor Akbar's *Hamza Nama* as well as several albums in Delhi.
- 143 *De Bagdad a Ispahan*, 1994, pp. 192-197.
- 144 *Masterpieces of Persian Art*, 2005, pp. 212-20. Another illustrated copy at Golestan Palace Library, Tehran (2258).
- 145 V. Loukonine & A. Ivanov, 1995, p.174, ill.171.
- 146 M. Bayani, 1966-69, pp. 295-304.
- 147 BL, London (Or. 2265). *Hunting for Paradise*, 2003, n°4, 29-31.
- 148 He was the son of the painter Mir Mosavver and at the invitation of the Homayun emperor emigrated to Kabul and later to Delhi working in the royal workshop with Abd al-Samad. He dies there in 1572.
- 149 *Hunting for Paradise*, 2003, n° 428-31; S.C. Welch, 1976, pp. 71-98. Both with several paintings illustrated.
- 150 TSK, Istanbul (HS. 25). Qurans written with this script are extremely rare.
- 151 National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg (Dorn 434), reproduced in *Hunting for Paradise*, 2003, n° 426.
- 152 M. S. Simpson, 1997. A seminal book about this manuscript.
- 153 Namely Aqa Mirak, Soltan Muhammad, Mirza 'Ali b. Soltan Muhammad, Mir Sayyid 'Ali, Farrukh Beg, Shaykh Muhammad, Muzaffar 'Ali and Muhammadi.

- 154 E.B. Monshi 1896, p.127, mentions him among the artists of Tahmasp's *kitabkhana*.
- 155 Fundação Gulbenkian, Lisbon.
- 156 TKS, Istanbul (R 1038).
- 157 TKS, Istanbul (H 1483).
- 158 Another posthumous allegoric portrait of this prince, figures on the left side of a double-page opening from a copy of Ebrahim Mirza's *Divan* dated 1582 (Aga Khan collection, Mss. 33, f 86a).
- 159 For further discussion see B. W. Robinson, *Muhammadi and the Khurasan Style*, Iran XXX, 1992, pp. 17-29, and A. Soudavar's article in *Muqarnas*, Vol. XVII, 2000, pp. 53-72.
- 160 *Hunting for Paradise*, 2003, PP. 146-147. Double-page frontispice of Amir Khosrow's *Khamsa*, with a dedicatory to Bahram Mirza inscribed in the cartouches below the text blocks, circa 1540.
- 161 W. M. Thackston, 2001, pp. 335-49. The original album is kept at TKS, Istanbul (H2154).
- 162 D. Roxburgh, 2005. A seminal book on extant Timurid and Safavid albums.
- 163 M.A. Muqtadir, 1908-39, n° 682, a copy dated 1560; see also R. Homayun-Farrokh (ed.) Tehran, 2005.
- 164 S.C. Welch, 1976, pl. 15, 16, 17 and 18.
- 165 Qazi Ahmad, 1959, p.182, this term, literally bristle, appears in a poem in praise of Shah Tahmasp's penmanship, thereafter commonly used to name fine ornamental drawings in gold.
- 166 Edited by A. Hasumogly Rahimoff, Moscow, 1977, pp. 102-7. This author also published 'Abdi Beg Neyshapuri's works *Majnun o Layla*, Moscow, 1966, and *Rowzat al-Sifat* (1559) Moscow, 1974.
- 167 D. Roxburgh, 2005, pp. 181-243.
- 168 See Y. Porter article *From the theory of two qalams*, in *Muqarnas*, vol. XVII, 2000, pp. 109-18.
- 169 A. Tokatlian, 2007. A seminal book on those dispersed pages.
- 170 British Library, London (Or. 12985).
- 171 A significant source for all of these events is the 1580 manuscript *Takmelat al-Akhbar* by 'Abdi Beg Shirazi. See facsimile edition and translation published by A.O. Efendiev, Baku, 1961, pp. 143-65; 179-99.
- 172 E.B. Monshi, 1896, p. 150, *passim*.
- 173 S. R. Canby, 1999, ill. 32-37; Melikian-Chirvani, 2007, n°73-74. Exhibited at Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, in 1912, before the manuscript was split and folios removed.
- 174 B. W. Robinson, 1967, p. 62, list of Siyavosh paintings.
- 175 He quit the Safavid court to join Prince Mirza-Hakim in Kabul and later the Jahangir court in Agra.
- 176 Two complete volumes at Golsetan Palace, Tehran (2237-38); a section of volume III at Sackler Gallery, Washington (S. 1986.47.57), and a section of volume III formerly in the Tabbagh collection in Paris.
- 177 Auction at Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 8. XII. 2003, lot 81, formerly Chandon de Briailles collection.
- 178 B. Schmitz, 1997, n°12, Nizami's Quintet made for 'Ali Khan Beg Turmen the finance comptroller at Qazvin.
- 179 F. Richard, 1997, n° 111, illustrated an *Ensha* manuscript dedicated to Zaman Bahador Khan, bearing this calligrapher's full name signature.
- 180 See samples of Ekhtyar Monshi's calligraphy in M.H. Esfahani, *Khatt o Khattatan*, Istanbul, 1888, p. 251.
- 181 M. Bayani, 1965-69, pp. 84-89, illustrations of three calligraphy specimens by his hand.
- 182 A copy at Punjab University confirms this authorship (M. Shafi, OCM, Vol. 26, n° 3, Lahore 1950, pp. 52-71).
- 183 Golestan Palace Library, Tehran (n° 671).
- 184 A. Tokatlian, 2009, pp. 19-27, biographical notices of those remarkable *gholams*.
- 185 Massively deported in 1604 from their homeland and established with privileges in Isfahan suburb called by Armenians *Nor Jugha* and *Jolfa-ye no Esfahan* by Persians. On this topic see Tokatlian, 2009, pp. 28-45.
- 186 *The Chester Beatty Library*, 2001, pp. 60-61, ill. 73.
- 187 S.R. Canby, 1999, pp. 70-72.
- 188 See the edition of A.Y. Kaziev, Baku, 1963; *Honar o Mardan* magazine, Tehran, 1970, pp. 13-20 and Y. Porter, *Peinture et Arts du livre*, Institut français de recherche en Iran, Téhéran-Paris, 1992, n° 25.
- 189 See the first Russian translation and a partial facsimile edition by B.N. Zakhoder, Moscow 1947; later translated and commented by V. Minorsky, Washington, 1959. Another edition by A. Sohayli Khawansari, Tehran, 1973 is based on a manuscript in a private collection at Tabriz.
- 190 S.R. Canby, 2006. Numerous illustrations of Reza-ye 'Abassi works.
- 191 TKS, Istanbul (H. 1641). See also several illustrations in S.R. Canby, 1996, ill. 59-65.
- 192 T. Stanley, 2004, p. 76, ill. 90.
- 193 For instance Polish envoys Broniowski (1585) and Muratowicz (1602); Spanish ambassador Silva y Figueroa (1617); Duke of Holstein envoy Olearius (1633) or French merchants Tavernier (1629) and Chardin (1664).
- 194 Period documents in the archives of the Armenian cathedral of *Nor Jugha* mentions this fact.
- 195 R. Skelton, 2000, pp. 249-263.
- 196 M. Aga-Oglu, 1941, pp. 43-48.
- 197 This assumption is based on comparative studies of similar patterns used in both techniques.
- 198 Only eighteen are extant and are housed in the museum of the holy shrine in Mashhad.

- 199 S.R. Canby, 2009, pp. 42-43, illustrations of some pages of poetry signed by 'Ali Reza. See also other signed calligraphies housed in the eponym artist's name museum in Tehran.
- 200 New York Public Library, Spencer collection (Pers. Ms. 6).
- 201 BnF, Paris (Arabe 6715, f 2v).
- 202 F. Richard, 1997, p. 222, n° 157.
- 203 M. Aga-Oglu, 1941, pl.XII.
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- 258 The Persian versions of Alexander Romance derivate from the Greek Pseudo-Callisthenes original.
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